A Commentary on the Chapter of 'Praise'

Imām Khomeinī (s)

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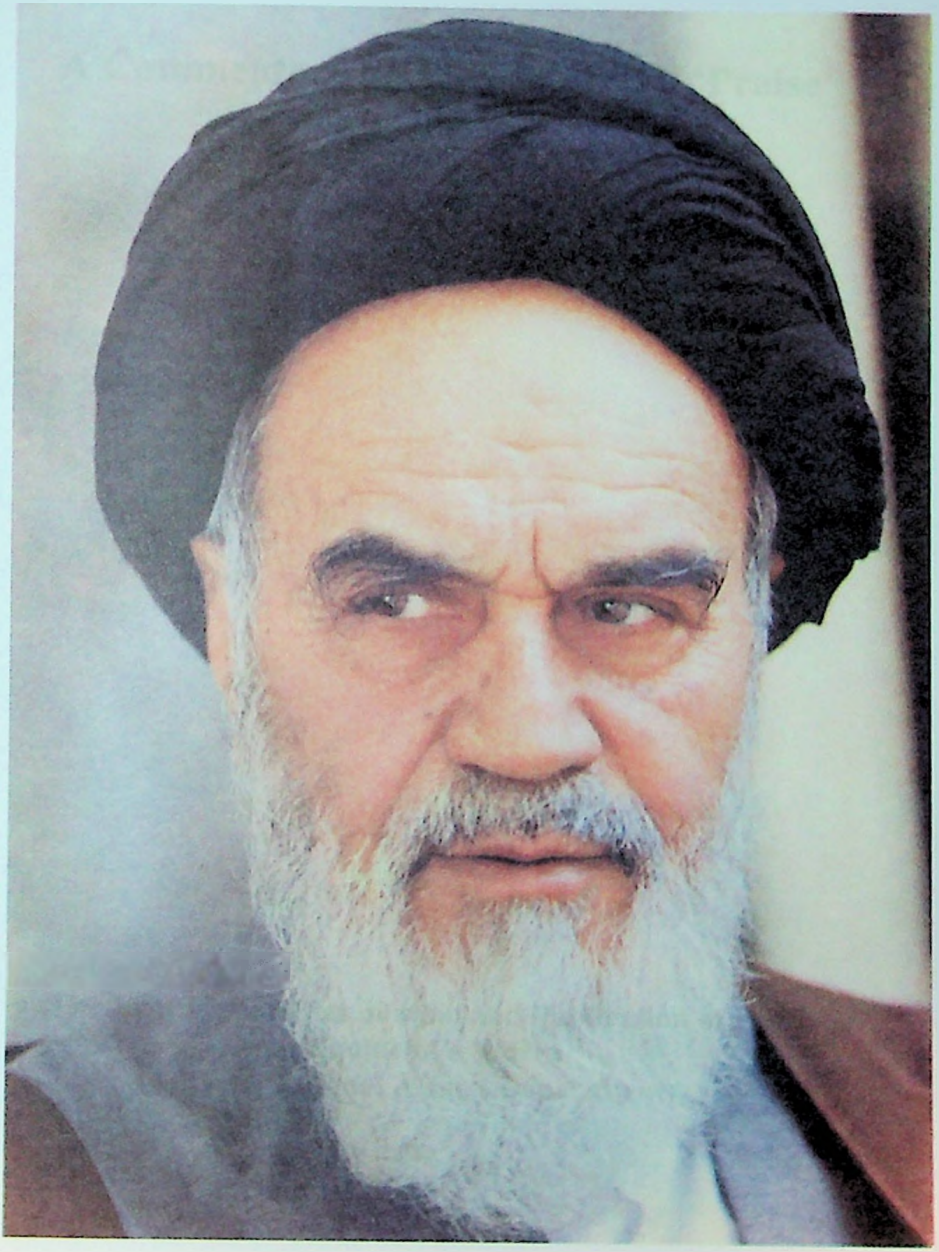
Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works
(International Affairs Department)



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Transliteration Symbols

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	ʾ	ا	a
ب	b	ت	t
ث	th	ج	j
ح	ḥ	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	dh
ر	r	ز	z
س	s	ش	sh
ص	ṣ	ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ	ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ	غ	gh
ف	f	ق	q
ك	k	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
هـ	h	و	w
ي	y	ة	ah
Long Vowels		**Short Vowels**	
آ	ā	ـَ	a
او	ū	ـُ	u
ای	ī	ـِ	i
Persian Letters			
Symbol	**Transliteration**	**Symbol**	**Transliteration**
پ	p	چ	ch
ژ	zh	گ	g

Preafce

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The explication on the holy Qur'an is one of the scientific branches combined with the knowledge of reading, recitation and history of the holy Qur'an whose background goes back to the era of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

For years, attempts have been made on the 'explication'. Every theologian has made efforts to give a comment on the issue in the light of his own knowledge and ability. Therefore, various commentaries have been written thereabout so far.

In these varieties of the explication, there are literary discussions, dissimilarities in reading, the state and the rank of the coming down of the verses, the narration of the verses, the commentary on verses and decrees, the moral discussions, scholastic, mystic, mandatory, social and political affairs. Each commentator in his works has referred to one or a few chapters of the aforementioned issue and most theologians have tried to

remove the veil from the divine mysteries according to their own standpoint and their specified background.

In fact, the commentary means removing the veil from the divine mysteries. Following is Imām Khomeinī's comment on this issue:

"Generally speaking the commentary on a book means simply conveying the sense and the connotation and the concept of the book—and more importantly to convey the author's idea and his point of view. This holy book, according to the confession of God almighty, is the book for guiding and teaching. It is also the illumination of humanity conducts and manners, that the commentator of which should show the prosperity way, the leading to the invisible realm, the manner of cognition and humanity to the disciples; of course not more the cause and the why of the coming down the verses which has been throughout—the commentary thoroughly.[1]

Imām Khomeinī has tried to clarify the meaning and the concept of the Qur'an in his own works and remarks as to prepare a way to train people. Therefore, he used different usual methods in conformity with the different trends of his own methods, the comments which over took even the others.

By removing the veil from the mysteries of the holy Qur'an, Imām Khomeinī has tried to clarify [the subject] for those interested in such matters, and the seekers of the true path.

The spirit and inspiration of this brilliant Book are clearly discernible in the whole works, deeds and speeches of Imām Khomeinī, but of course, the specified works about the conception of the holy Qur'an can be classified into some definite groups:

- Perfect commentary on some of verses of Qur'an...
- Commentary on Qur'anic verses...

[1] *The discipline of Prayer*, pp. 193-5.

- Commentary on verses of decrees in jurisprudential works and the theologians issues according to the subjects...
- Commentary on some verses, differently, which suits the matter...
- Comparison and attestation to the Qur'anic verses in mystical, moral, social and political fields...

The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works according to the calling which ought to be performed, is determined to publish all works of Imām Khomeinī about the commentary on Qur'an coupled with his view about Qur'an in a regular way in the form of a "collective works".

The commentary on verse praise is the first work of such sorts which has been offered to the lovers of these kinds of works".

The commentary on verse praise is the first work of such sorts, which has been offered to the lovers of these kinds of works.

Qur'an in a regular way in the form of a "collective works."

The first work of such sorts, which has been offered to the lovers of these kinds of books.

Imām's method on commenting a verse perfectly is a gnostic and educative method, for he believes that Qur'an by enjoying the culture is a human lecturer.

This method too has been seen in some of the previous works of a few of theologians who focused their comments upon the gnostic, moral and sagacious trend;

Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān, *Kashf al-Asrār*, commentary on *Sūrah Fātiḥah*".

"*Fātiḥah al-Kitāb* is as the mentioned issues.

The commentary on Fātiḥah al-Kitāb enjoys subtle delicate points and gnostic profound points, which make this work

remarkable, and elevates it to the high level, more important than the others' works thereabout.

Such process e.g. this distinguished view is inspired by the great mentality of Imām Khomeinī who is the expert in Qur'an of the era, who comprehended these realities and put it down in written works.

Comparing between the Imām's aspects in this trend with some other ones—their comments on Sūrah Ḥamd will clarify this point so obvious to the epistemologists, that the discussion about which does not suit here because of limitation of space, and also as it is a long discussion for our passage.

Regarding to the importance and the Qur'anic debates, in the first step, we have compiled the commentary on "Sūrah Ḥamd" in this book. And also due to this reason that whatever has been gathered so far entitled and is known as "The Commentary on Sūrah Ḥamd" by Imām Khomeinī have been only topic for a few lectures, which were merely about the debates of (bismillāh) in the Name of God, the compassionate, the merciful, which was not even perfectly explained. Therefore some people have thought that the whole commentary on Sūrah Ḥamd commented by Imām Khomeinī confined to the mentioned lectures.

The present book is to remove such ambiguity, therefore, as it will be seen, this book consists of four parts, a collectively works about the commentary on Sūrah Ḥamd by Imām Khomeinī. This book is presented to these who are interested in such issues;

Part one: A concise commentary on Sūrah Ḥamd which is taken from the valuable book "Sirr aṣ-Ṣalāt" a book on mysticism explaining the ethical and mystical secrets of the namāz, written in 1358 ↔ AHS 1318 AH 1939 by Imām Khomeinī.

Part two: After the triumph of revolution in February 1979 Imām Khomeinī consented to give lectures on Sūrah al-Fātiḥah,

or Sūrah al-Ḥamd the opening chapter of the Qur'an. The point of departure and return is always the opening chapter, and more importantly, the wide range of subjects evoked illustrates the fact that the chapter contains the whole of Islam compressed within it—that it is "the mother of the book" as the Prophet designated it... This part is neatly has been prepared.

Part three: It is a commentary, which can be considered as a comment and explication on Sūrah Ḥamd that was written in 1361 AHS.

Part Four: Different phrases, which are about Bis-millah and some main parts of Sūrah Ḥamd in the Imām's written and oral works.

In this work, like the other ones the Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works has tried to offer a distinguished book illuminating the view of the great leader whose works are going to be published in the same way from now on.

The Institute for Complication and
Publication of Imām Khomeinī's Works
International Affairs Department

PART ONE

A Commentary on the *Ḥamd Sūrah* Exstracted from the Book *Sirr aṣ-Ṣalat*

Brief Summery on Some of the Secrets behind the *Ḥamd Sūrah*

Be aware that "bismillāh" in the name of God", at the beginning of each verse is syntactically connected to the verse which follows it, as it has been considered by the theologians. For this reason, in some aspects, "In the name of God" contains a concept different from the "bismillāh" belonging to another verse, rather, "bismillāh" of each utterer in each utterance, in each conduct differs from "bismillāh" of the other verse's "bismillāh". Describing this issue briefly is as follows:

It has been realized that the whole house of realization, from the beginning of existence till the ultimate end of the system of existence (all the particles of existence are the phenomena of God's name) [namely the entire being] is the manifestation stage of God's supreme name. It is the manifestation of manifesting, the absolute "will" that the agent source name, as it has been said;

"*Ẓahara al-wujūdu bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm.*[1]

---

[1] The being (existence) with "bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm" appeared. *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 2, p. 133.

Therefore, if we observe the multiplicity of manifestations and determination [we will comprehend] the agent or the aspect, which comes after it, has manifested each name.

And the first step of the traveler on the way to Here after in his way faring is to teach his heart make it understand-that "bismillāh" is a mere manifesting determination, rather all are selves the name of God. And in this vision of light, names become different.

The comprehension, contraction, the domination and the subordination of each name are followed by the manifestation and the mirror on which the (name) has been manifested.

[The wayfarer's aspect about *bismillāh* after abolishing determination and achieving the secret of the agent unity]

Though the God's name according to the house of realization stands anterior to its manifestation, which is constitutive and subsistent for it yet due to the limitation, it stands appraiser to the manifestation, for the name is set in its own rank. And when the spiritual wayfarer by abolishing the attributions and concealing the limitations would achieve the secret agent of deism, there, all verses, all aspects all conducts would possess only one single "bismillāh" with the same concept.

Due to the first reasoning, there is no name more perfect, more comprehensive than "bismillāh" connected to the verse praise in the Qur'anic verses, as it is comprehended through the famous tradition, related to the "Mawlā al-Mawālī" [namely Imām 'Alī ('a)].

This is why that the definition of verse praise is much greater than the other bismillāh, belonging to other verses.

As the learned theologians comment; the verse praise refers to the world of intelligible whose praised tongues are the essence tongues. And "rabb al-'ālamīn" [the God of the worlds] refers to the manifestation of "bismillāh" on the natural mirror due to the rank of divinity, which is reverting from defection into the

perfection, and from the world of body to the world of pure intelligence and it is the characteristic of the world of materials bodies' essence. And "māliki yawmi ad-dīn" [the owner of the resurrection Day] refers to absolute reverting and the Resurrection.

And when the eternity would dawn and the light of unity manifestation would manifest inside the mystic's heart at the time of the Resurrection dawn, this cause the mystic attain the absolute presence. Thus, through the intercourse stage in the contiguous stage and the sacred rank through "iyyāka na'budu" [Thee only we serve thee only we pray for succor"] the spiritual wayfarer will become fluent. And after having become sober, following the purge he would ask for his own leading stage and his spiritual wayfaring companions.

[Bismillāh is the most perfect and the most comprehensive name of God].

Due to the foregoing reason, the verse praise is the whole structure of the being scientifically, objectively, purely, soberly, advisedly, conductively; and the name and its manifestation is supreme name and the absolute will:

"Fahuwa miftāḥ al-kitāb wa mikhtāmuhū wa fātiḥatuhū wa khitāmuhū" as the name of God is the manifestation, the mid-name, the beginning and the ending:

"*Allāhu nūru 's-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍ*"[1]

Therefore, the commentary on this verse accordance with the taste of the learned theologians is a follows:

Through the manifestation of the name of God, which is the stage of absolute "Will" and the Supreme God's name that possesses the mercifulness will stage, which is the comprehension of the absolute being and the compassion's "will", which is the offering of the being's perfection, the absolute praise world and the origin praised which is from the

[1] God is the light of the earth and the heavens; *Sūrah al-Nūr*: 35.

first stage of unseen limitation up to the end of horizon of the world's idea, namely the first Limbo.

The meaning of "lillāh" for the stage of the perfect name, i.e. "Allah" is constant and for Him is the rank of divinity and nourishing the "Worlds", i.e. the stage of evenness and the manifestation of nature.

And this is the stage of divinity being, manifested in compassionateness mercifulness's Deity that within the material world offering blessedness, through compassion, and in the "hayūlī"—matter [the marital realm] stage, after nourishing, would be taken to their own especial stage. And it is "māliki yawmi ad-dīn" that through the authority of ownership would seize all the particles of the beings and revert them to the unseen stage.

"*Kamā bada'akum ta'ūdūn.*"[1]

And this the whole circle of the being which in bismillāh" has been mentioned briefly, but in verse praise in detail. And, as, there has been in tradition, "māliki yawmi ad-dīn" is for the justice only.

And as the creature of spiritual wayfaring upon the ladder "iqra' wa'rqa"[2] and on the threshold of ascending "aṣ-ṣalātu mi'rāj al-mu'min" would observe the reverting of all beings and the defacing of the house of realization to the justice and the justice caused the spiritual wayfarer comprehend the manifestation of unity, the creature through the intuitive tongue would utter; "iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn"

And because the light of the perfect man is encompassing overall limited illuminations, prayers and the house of realization [the praiser] in the plural case would utter;

---

[1] As he brought you into being, so return ye (on to Him); *Sūrah al-A'rāf*: 29.
[2] "Read and ascent, *Usūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 6.

"*Sabbaḥnā fasabbahf023at al-malā'ikatu wa qaddasnā faqaddasati al-malā'ikatu wa law lānā mā sabbaḥat al-malā'ikatu*"[1]

And when the spiritual wayfarer would offer himself coupled with his egoism and selfishness entirely to the sacred essence and would abolish everything but the justice the eternity bounty from the unseen unity stage through the sacred blessing would reach him and causes him become sober coming to sobriety after purge. Then he will be reverted to his own stage defacing into the justice being. And when he occurs in multiplicity he will worry about the separation and detachment and asks for his guidance, which is the absolute guidance to the straight path of humanity the comprehensive spiritual wayfaring reverting to the stage of God's supreme name-which is beyond the limitation of the two extremes, namely beyond the limitation of "*maghḍūbun 'alayhim wa laḍ-ḍāllīn*"

Or he asks for the leading to the limbo stage which is the stage of being lack of domination of the unity over multiplicity and [on the contrary] lack of the domination of multiplicity over the unity. This is the stage between veiling of unity to the veiling of multiplicity: the stage of "*maghḍūbun 'alayhim*".

This is also the stage of multiplicity to the stage of unity namely the stage of "*ḍāllīn*" [astrays] and the puzzled ones at the court of divine Glory, where the spiritual wayfarer will ask for.

Union: *Ruwiya fi't-tawḥīd 'an ar-riḍā ('a) ḥīna su'ila 'an tafsīri'l-bismillāh, qāla ar-rāwī faqultu lahū: ma's-simatu? Qāla: al-'Allāmah.*[2]

---

[1] We praised, therefore the angles did too, and we worshipped the God, so did the angles, otherwise they would not have done it" *'Uyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, vol. 1, chap. 26, p. 262.

[2] In the book of *tawhīd* it has been related by Imām Riḍā ('a) that when he was asked about the "commentary" of bismillāh, he said;"bismillāh is that I am called by a "Same" of the God's "Same" and it is considered worshipping. The narrator said that he asked; "What is a same?" Imām said;" It is sign".

And by means of this holy tradition it is clarified that the spiritual wayfarer must be knowledgeable to the stage of God's name while praying. Achieving this stage of the reality of obeisance is to be defaced into divinity stage and as far as the spiritual wayfarer is within the veil of egoism he is out of the obeisance state, rather, he is self-love, selfish and his idol temples are his whimsical desires:

[*ara'ayta man attakhadha ilāhu hawā'u*][1] and his view conforms will view of the dammed Satan who saw himself and Adam (*'a*) while considering himself superior to Adam (*'a*).

"*khalaqtanī min nār wa khalaqthū min ṭīn*".

He (Satan) replied and caos expelled out among the saints from the threshold of the God's Court. Therefore the utterer of *bismillāh* would engage his spirit endowed with "God's Sign) and he himself would achieve the formal stage and his view would conform with the Adam's (*'a*) view and would see the house of realization in which exists himself

"*wa 'allama ādama al-asmā'a kulluhā*".[2]

In this case his naming is the reality naming and he is knowledgeable to the worshipping stage which is the instillation of "selfhood" and disconnecting desires as to connecting to the God; as the tradition quoted of Imām al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) is mentioned;

"*Yaqṭa'u 'alā'iqa al-ihtimāmi bi ghayri man lahū qaṣada wa ilayhi wafada wa minhu istarfada.*"[3]

And when the spiritual wayfarer would be bestowed, the formal stage he would find himself submerged in divinity:

"*Al-'ubūdiyyatu jawharatun kunhuhā ar-ruhūbiyyah.*"[4]

---

[1] "Have you seen him who chooses for his God his own lust? Would you then be the guardian over him? *Sūrah al-Furqān*: 43.

[2] And he thought Adam all names the criterion; *Sūrah al-Baqarah*: 31.

[3] The train of connection, except the one who is determined to go towards Him and is asking for help is disconnected: *Falāḥ al-Sā'il*, p. 25.

[4] The God's obedience is the essence of the core which is divinity *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharī'ah*, Chapter 100.

Then he sees himslef "God's Name" the sign of God and being defaced into God; likewise, he sees the other creatures with the same aspect.

And if he were a perfect "*walī*" he would become knowledgeable to the absolute name and the case of realization of the absolute obeisance would touch him, then he will become a real obeisance, namely "God's slave"

And it is possible that interpretation used for "Obeisance" in the holy verse:

[*Subḥāna al-ladhī asrā bi-'abdihī.*][1]

The ascending would be proximity and the sacred stage, the proximity state through the obedient step and indigence, rejecting the egoism corona, selfhood, which is independence. And confessing to the prophethood in the profession of faith state, which is followed after confessing to obeisance, because the obeisance is the ladder of prophethood. And in prayer, which is the pious's ascension, and the manifestation of the Prophet's (*'a*) ascension, with the foregoing profession in the prayer, must be started. [Confessing to the obeisance] Having abolished the veil, [entering] "*bismillāh*" which is the reality of obeisance "*fasubḥāna al-ladhī asrā bi nabiyyihī bi mirqāti al-'ubūdiyyati al-muṭlaqah*".[2]

Glorified be who carried His prophet through the absolute obeisance ladder by night from the Inviolable place of worship" and through the obeisance step attracted him to unity stage, releasing him from the universe heaven, the celestial realm and carried the other creatures who have become purge through the pure light, named a "God's sign" of the God's signs. And to the

[1] *Sūrah al-Isrā'*: 1.

[2] Glorified be He who carried His prophet through the absolute slavery ladder by night from the inviolable place of worship".

ladder of realization to the God's name the intuition of which is obeisance: That leads to the ascension's favor.

And the spiritual wayfarer would come across the circle of being, he would be able enter it as much as his conductive step allows him, namely into the beginning of the spiritual book and the spiritual treasure's key. Thus all praise worthiness and prayers would pertain to Him the justice, to the stage of the perfect name, while (the spiritual wayfarer) does not see any erudition and excellence for any being of the creatures, except

God almighty because being contrary to the formal aspect, and if he would utter "*bismillāh*", in reality, he would utter "*al-ḥamd*" as well in the same manner. And if within the veil of people, like Satan being deprived of the formal stage, he is not able to pertain the praise worthiness to the justice. And as far as he stands within the veil of egoism, he is deprived of the obeisance and formalism. And as far as he is deprived of this stage, he will not reach the stage of praiseworthiness. And as far as pertain the attributive praise worthiness to the justice considering the justice both praiser and being praised and sees Him in the same frame; and as far as he considers himself praiser and would see the justice the praised one, he is not the praiser of the justice, rather, the praiser of the justice and the people, rather the prayer of self only, and he is deprived of justice and His praise and when he would achieve the stage of praise worthiness utter. "*anta kamā athnayta 'alā nafsika.*"[1] And within the veil of claim and needed proving the praised worthiness, goes out, then the case of the obedient spiritual wayfarer in this stage is: "*bismihī al-ḥamdu lahū minhu al-ḥamdu wa lahū al-ḥamd.*"[2] And this is the result of the esteem's bounties to which in holy

[1] "I appeal to you from you; I am not able to fulfill your praising." *Furūgh al-Kāfī*, vol. 3 p. 324.

[2] In His name, praising is His.

tradition was referred: "*fa idhā aḥbabtuhū kuntu sam'ahū wa baṣarahū wa lisānahū*".[1]

Ribb al-'ālamīn: "The two worlds" if "*rabb al-'ālamīn*" the two worlds would be the formal names which is the firm essence it will be the divinity essence, describing the stage of essential divinity, which is the supreme name". For, the firm essence through the essential manifestation in the unity stage secondary to the perfect name—being limited by the manifesting of sacred blessedness, which has been found expression in scientific realization. And the concept of divinity at that sacred stage is being manifested through divinity stage to which pertains to the manifestation of all names being determinated. And the essence of the constant perfect man primarily and the other assenie secondary, will be determinated. And the compassionateness and the mercifulness offering the same essence from the unseen identity as far as the threshold of absolute confession. There are intuition love and the perfect absolute affection within their essence that through the motivating intuition affection and its attraction power, which has been reflected upon their faces, will achieve the stage of absolute reward, namely, drown within the perfect unity ocean, *alā ila 'llāhi taṣīru al-umūr*.[2]

Thus the ultimate of wishes conducts, and desires and the source of the creatures, the beloved of the universe the favor of the attracted ones, is the sacred essence, nevertheless they are all being deprived of Him pretending to be fond of some other beloved and affairs. And this is vast intuition veil the spiritual wayfarer should through the cognition move tears it and unless he reaches this stage, he is not namely "*lā naṭlubu illā iyyāk*" and "Thee only we serve; Thee only we pray for succor. We, all the creatures from the wisest one up to the meanest one, from the

[1] As I love him I would be His eyes and His tongue *Usūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, tradition 8. In his name, praising is His. p. 352.

[2] "All things at last return to God only "*Sūrah al-Shu'arā*: 53.

heaven up to the material world, everyone, everywhere within everything and from any beloved is demanding you; loving you through any beloved:

Fiṭrata allāhi allatī faṭara an-nāsa 'alayhā[1] *yusabbihu lahū mā fis-samāwāti wa'l-arḍ.*[2]

"So set thy purpose for religion as a man by nature upright—the nature of Allah in which, he has created man—He is Allah, than whom there is no other than God, the knower of the invisible and the invisible. He is the beneficent the merciful.

Then he finds himself God's name, God's sign and defaced himself into the God's wayfaring the other creatures with the same vision. If he is perfect "*walī*" he will be knowledgeable to the absolute name, then the realization of the absolute obeisance touches him, he becomes a real God's obeisance "God's slave"

It is probable that interpretation the term "Obeisance" in the holy verse: Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable place of worship, refers to the same case. For the ascension is the contiguousness and the horizon of sacred and assembly of proximity towards obeisance and indigence, and also is the abolishing the ambiguity of selfishness and the stage independent. And confessing the prophetic in profession of faith (an act in the daily prayers) after confessing the obeisance, because the obeisance is the prophetic ladder. And in prayers, which is the pious's ascension and the manifestation of prophethood's ascension, (confession to the prophethood) follows it. After having abolished the veil to *bismillāh* which is the reality of obeisance attracts him towards the stage of obeisance to the horizon of unity and released him from earth, heaven and the celestial kingdom, and took the other creatures who are being illuminated by that pure light, named by God's

[1] *Sūrah al-Rūm*: 30.
[2] *Sūrah al-Hashr*: 24.

sign and the realization of God's reality the inside of which is obeisance towards the nearness ascension. and when the spiritual wayfarer saw the circle of being merely God's name according to his initiative conducts is able to enter the beginning of the God's book and the key of the God's treasure, then he returns all praising to the justice in the formalism perfect stage and does not see any erudition and excellence for any creature but the God, because otherwise it is contrary to the formal vision. And if he utters "*bismillāh*" in its own real meaning, he can utter the "*al-ḥamd*" in the same trend. And if he, like "Iblis" in the cover of the people of the stage name is deprived, he is not able to return praising to the justice as well. And as far as he stays within the veil of selfishness, he is deprived of the obeisance and formalism state. And as far as he is deprived of this case he won't be able to achieve the praised state. And if through the process of obeisance and the reality of the formalism will achieve the praised state, the qualification of the praised state is considered and specified for the justice by the spiritual wayfarer and he will consider the justice both praise and the praised one as a single unit and sees Him with the same aspect, then as far as he thinks of himself as the God's worshipper and sees the justice his aim for praising, he is not the [God's] praiser, but he is the praiser of himself and is deprived of the justice and His praising. And when he achieves the point of the praised stage, he will say: [*anta kamā athnayta 'alā nafsika*] He will be out of the praised veil which is next to the claim and confined to the being praised confirmation. Thus, the article "Obedient spiritual wayfarer" in this stage is as follows." [*bismihī al-ḥamdu lahū minhu al-ḥamdu wa lahu al-ḥamd*].

And this is the outcome of esteem's bounties, which in the holy tradition was referred to. There it is said; "*rabb al-'ālamīn*" [The God of the both worlds].

If "The two worlds" "*al-'ālamīn*" is the formal names which are firm essence, the divinity will be of the essence state, and the

name is the supreme name, because the constant essence by the manifestation essence in the stage of the unity, following the collective name, which by the manifestation of the sacred blessedness has been determined, is manifested in scientific realization. The concept of the divinity at that sacred rank is manifested by the manifestations of the names will be determinate, and the constant essence would be the perfect human primarily, then the other essence after him will be determinate. And the compassion and the mercifulness" is the expression of that form from the absence of identity to the horizon of the absolute confession. It is the nature love entrusting and the absolute perfect liking within their essence: "*alā ila'-llāhi taṣīr al-umūr.*"

Thus, by this way the ultimate aims and the ultimate actions and the utmost desires and the source of beings and the beloved of the world and the idol of the lovers and the favorite of the absorbed ones, is the sacred being, though all of them are invisible for this beloved they consider themselves involved and the lovers of some other affairs. And this great veil is nature that the spiritual wayfarer must tear it though the step of knowledge. and as far as he does not reach to such a stage he is not allowed to utter "*iyyāka na'budu*" namely "*lā naṭlubu illā iyyāka*" and [must not say] and I seek only you, and I want only you only, and except you I praise no one, and I seek your help in all affairs, from the lowest point to the ultimate invisible constant forms are seeking justice and anyone, within any beloved, is seeking you or offering love to any beloved:

[*Fiṭrata allāhi allatī faṭara an-nāsa 'alayhā*].

[*yusabbiḥu lahū mā fis-samāwāti wa'l-arḍ*].

And when the spiritual wayfarer would attain this stage and found himself through in love with the justice and utter it

verbally, he is seeking help for union and the right path, which is the way of the God's "*inna rabbī 'alā ṣirāṭin mustaqīm.*"[1]

And that path is inspired by the great messengers and the saints and it is returning from the constant form to the God's stage and being defaced within the God's stage and not defaced within the God's sings, which is fault. As it is quoted by the great messenger who said: "*kāna akhī mūsā 'aynuhū al-yumnā 'amyā'a wa akhī 'īsā 'aynuhū al-yusrā 'amyā'a wa ana dhul-'aynayn.*"[2]

The majestic Moses' multiplicity was encompassed over unity and the majestic Jesus unity's was encompassed over the multiplicity and the great messenger enjoyed the great intermediate stage which is the mid-night path [Is the mus; the interval between date and the day of resurrection.]

So far, the commentary on verse praise was to be the worlds. The stage of the manifestation forms and if the world the stages of attributes names or intrinsic names or agent names or the abstract worlds or the material worlds or both of them, the commentary of the verse is different.

Similarly, if God's name in the holy verse *bismillāh*... is something but the stage of "Will" any other stages unseen or so on the whole verse (commentary) differs.

And again, if "Allah" is to be essential divine or presence and "the *raḥmān*" and "*raḥīm*" in *bismillāh* would be attribute for the name or for "God" the commentary of the holy verse differs. Likewise, if Ba in *bismillāh* is for seeking help, accompanying, or it would belong to the existence or if it belongs to the verse itself or to any part of the verse, then the differences will be appeared. As according to the principal rule of reading, being in the veil of multiplicity or encompassing of

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[1] *Sūrah Hūd*: 56.

[2] My brother Muses his right eye was blind: my brother Jesus his left eye was blind, but I see through both eyes.

unity or sobriety after effacement other stages which have been mentioned the commentary of the verse should be different. And being master about them all and a real commentary on Qur'an, which is the perfect word, above the all words, is beyond the ability a person like this writer *innamā ya'rifu al-qur'āna man khūṭiba bih.*[1]

And whatever it has been said it was probability God is the guide.

[1] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 46.

PART TWO

A Commentary on the Ḥamd Sūrah Exstracted from the Book Disciplines of the Prayer

Concerning the Summary of the Verse Praise and Some Disciplines of Praising and Recitation

Be aware that the theologians differ about the relation of "*bā*" in the "*bismillāh*" *ir-raḥmān ir-raḥīm*. Each theologian, accordance with his own view, knowledge and Gnosticism has expressed some comment thereabout. For instance, the learned theologians connect it to the entry "Beginning" or seeking help. As to some narratives it means:" I seek help" it conforms with the common taste, being so frequent in the traditions and the variety of a lot of traditions is clarified to this attitude and therefore that Imām al-Riḍā (*'a*) expressed *bismillāh* to convey the meaning "I put on myself a "sign" of God's[1] or "Seeking help" conveys too subtle conception to be comprehended by the ordinary people, including the mystery of Towhid in a more delicate contact.

Some of the knowledgeable men comment that *bismillāh* refers to "appeared" namely: existence appeared by *bismillāh*.[2]

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[1] Tawhid, ch. 31, *ḥadīth* 1, p. 229. *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, vol. 3.

[2] This aspect of the meaning of the *bismillāh* is stated by Muhy al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, vol. 1, p. 102.

This, conforms with the knowledgeable men of conduct and Gnosticism, uttering that the entire Beings, the particles of existence and the visible and the invisible realm of manifestations of the whole-encompassing Name of God, namely "The supreme Name" of God: The "Greatest Name". Therefore "Name" which means "Sign" and "Mark" or zenith and Altitude is God's effusive and actual manifestation being called "effusive Emanation" and brilliant annexation, for due to this conduct, the entire of house of Realization as from the abstract understanding low to the lowest degrees of existence are the phemenalizations of this emanation and the alights of this blessing. Such manner has been approved by the most noble divine verses and the holy traditions of the infallible and purified (*'a*) like the extinguished tradition in *al-Kāfī* saying: God created the things by means of "Will"[1] by beings through Will. This holy tradition is interpreted accordance with the view of each interpreter's belief. The most distinctive one is which conforms with the belief that mentions "Will" conveys the conception—here—the "Agent Will" namely; effusive Emanation and the "Things" refers to the existence's stages being the phenomena and the descent of this blessing. Thus, the conception of the tradition is as follows:

God, the exalted created the "Agant will", being the shadow of old essential "will", by means of the will itself, lack of any means, and the other creatures, visible and invisible [both] would have created secondary of that.

"Sayyid Muḥaqqiq Famamd"[2] despite enjoying a high rank as a theologian and strict researcher has commented this holy

[1] *Usūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 49. "*Book of at-Tawhīd*," ch. on "The will is Among the Attributes of Action 4; *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 4, p. 145.
[2] *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, vol. 2, p. 19; *al-Wāfī*, vol. 1, p. 100.

tradition in an odd way. The same state goes to the commandment of late Fayḍ being away from the correctness.[1]

In any care "Name" is the very manifestation of act that is realized with this house of realization. Naming "Name" as a term that refers to the real things is mostly observed to be used by God, His messenger and infallible saying: "We are the comely Names".[2]

Therefore, in the holy invocations[3] one repeatedly utters "By your name in which you manifested to do so and so. There is a possibility that *bismillāh* of the noble verse praise belongs to the verse itself. This view conforms to mystic taste and the view of the learned theologians, as it is to say that the praise of the praisers and the applause of the applausers refer to self-subsistence of the Name God. Thus, the naming stands as a preliminary to the entire terms and action which is an ordinance religious deed, and it is for recalling that the whole deeds and utterances, all the particles of existence are the phenomena of "God's Name" and in another word, they are themselves "God's Names". Upon this ground, the concept of the *bismillāh* accordance with the majority differs in each verse, each term, and each deed. The theologians have said: *bismillāh* must be defined for each verse, and if for a verse a *bismillāh* was resisted, this cannot be defined for the next verse, namely beginning with the previous *bismillāh*. Due to this juristic aspect, there is a reason for it, in fact it goes suit with the scope of this theory. And according to the abolishing of multiplicities in the Supreme Name of God the *bismillāh* as a whole enjoying a unique single concept.

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[1] *Al-Wāfī*, vol. 1, sec. on "knowing His Attributes and Names, the Glorified," ch. on "The Attributes of the Act," explanation of *ḥadīth* 4, p. 100.

[2] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, "*Book of al-Tawḥīd*," "Rarities," *ḥadīth* 4, p. 196.

[3] From the noble invocation called *Du'ā as-Simat*. See *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*.

As these two views, exist to the stages of existence and the stations of invisibility and visibility. In the multiplicity, point of view and observing the phenomena, all the multiplied beings the stage of existence and the phenomena of the realm are the different names of the beneficent, the merciful, the powerful and the Gracious. In addition, the view of abolishing of multiplicities and the defacing of the lights of existence in the eternal light of sacred emanation, except the sacred emanation. There is nothing, there is nothing but the entire encompassing Name of God.

And both these views exist in the divine names and adjectives. Due to the first view, the state of unity is the state of multiple names and adjectives, as the whole multiplicities are from Him. Owing to the latter view there is no name and form, but the supreme name of God. These two views are discreet and erudite. But, if the opinion the doors of the hearts and through the steps of conduct and affectionate austerity, God the exalted will appear in the heart of its beholders by means of His manifestation in Deed, name and essence, sometimes in the Attribute of multiplicity and sometimes in the attribute of unity. The Holy Qur'an mentions these manifestations, both obviously and directly as His saying: "And whom His Lord manifested His illumination to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust, and Moses fell down unconscious,[1] and indirectly as in the scenes observed by Ibrahīm (*'a*) referring repeatedly to the same issue, especially in the exalted invocation entitled "*samāt*" the deniers of which can not deny its authenticity and text, this invocation has been approved by both the Sunni and the Shi'ah, by both learned and the common people. In this glory invocation, there are very important conceptions and teachings smelling that raptures of the knowledgeable heart, and the breeze of which

[1] *Sūrah al-A'rāf*: 143.

blows divine fragrance into the spiritual wayfarer's spirit, as it says:

By your Glory which appeared at the mountain of Ṭūr Sīnā with which you talked to your servant and messenger, Moses son of 'Imrān (*'a*) and by your rise in Sā'īr and your appearance on the mount Faran.[1]

Briefly, the spiritual wayfarer to God is to make his heart comprehend while reciting the *bismillāh* that the entire outward and inward beings and the entire worlds, the visible and invisible ones, are under the teachings of the Name of God, or rather they are manifested by the manifestation of the names of God, and all his actions and stillness and all the realms are based upon the self-existence of the Supreme name of God. Therefore, his praises are for God, and his worships, obeisance, monotheism and sincerity are all for of the self-existence of the name of God. Through the restrict recalling, which is the goal of worship, that this state of this divine blessing is firmed and fixed within the heart as God, the exalted, in his proximity session and sacred assembly with his interlocutor said: "Verily I am God, there is no God but I; so worship Me and perform the prayer for My remembrance."[2]

The aim of observing prayer is, He said; to remember Him. After severe recalling another way of knowledge will be opened to the heart of the mystic and he will be attracted to the world of unity until the tongue of his heart utters "Praise is for God by God" and "You praise yourself"[3] and "I refuge in you from you".[4]

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[1] Extracted from the du'ā as-Simat, *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*, p. 376.

[2] Sūrah Ṭā Hā 20:14.

[3] Of an invocation from the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) in his prostration. *Furū' al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 324; *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharī'ah*, ch. 5; *'Awālī al-La'ālī*, vol. 1, p. 389, *ḥadīth* 21.

[4] *Ibid.*, *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa Silāḥ al-Muta'abbid*, p. 308.

This was a brief explanation of relation of the letter *bā* in *bismillāh* and some details thereabout. As to the mysteries of its innermost refers to the Alawien position of guardianship, and the stage of Qur'anic collective union a vast scope is needed for clarification. But in fact the truth of the "Name" enjoys a visible stage, an invisible and enjoys a mystery of the mystery a stage of manifestation and a manifestation of the manifestation. The Name is a "sign" of God and it is abolished in His sacred essence. Therefore, any name which is closer to the horizon of the unity and farther from the multiplicity realm is more perfect in nomination and the most perfect name is the one that is innocent from multiplicities even the multiplicity of knowledge and that is the invisible manifestation of "God Oneness" in the essence by the state of the "holiest emanation" that is possible what was referred to by the holy verse[1] "... or closer still", and afterwards there is the manifestation by the "Holy Emanation" then there are the manifestations by the adjectives of multiplicity in the essence, till the last stage of the house of realization. The writer [Imām Khomeinī (*'a*)] has explained this concise in *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah*[2] and in the exegesis of "*Du'ā al-Saḥar*".[3]

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[1] "So he was at the measure of two bows or closer still." *Sūrah al-Najm* 53:9.

[2] *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyat* is a book written in the Arabic language by Imām Khomeinī (may Allah sanctify his honorable soul), explaining some truths and knowledge concerning the caliphate and guardianship. In the Preface to this honorable book he says: " I like to uncover for you, in this paper, by the help of Allah, the guadian of guidance in the beginning and in the end, an indication of the Muhammadan caliphate, and an exudation of the truth of the 'Alawiyān guardianship (upon them be the greeting from the beginning to eternity) and how they spread through the invisible and visible worlds.... or rather it should b named: *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyat* to caliphate and guardianship. I ask Allah success, as He is the best assistant and company, and I ask His pure guardians their patronage in this world and in the other world..." The writer finished writing the book in the month of Shawwāl, 1349 A.H.

[3] The exegesis of *Du'ā' al-Saḥar* is of the exudations of the pen of Imām Khomeinī (may Allah be pleased with him) in Arabic. The aim of writing it, as the exegete himself says, was to explain some aspects of the noble invocation called "*Mubāhilah*." (the invocation of Sahar has been narrated

And God is the stage of appearance in the "Holy emanation" if by "Name" if the existential individualities, are meant in which state refers to God being as a union between the manifest and the manifestations, and the abolishing of the "Name in the named is acceptable, perchance the verses "God is the light of the heaven and the earth[1] and "And he it is who in the heaven and in the earth is God"[2] referring to the foregoing state and are the obvious proving the above application. It is the stage of unity and the union of the names. On the other hand, it is the stage of the Supreme name of God if by "Name" the stage of manifestation by the "Holy emanation" is meant, subsequently the stages of Beneficent" and merciful differ, accordance with these two possibilities as is obvious.

It may that "Beneficent" the merciful are attributes for name or it is possible by attributes for God, but they are more apt to be attribute for name,, because in praising they are attributes for God, therefore it will be immune from repeating, though if they are the God's attributes is also proper. In repeating there is a point of rhetoric. If the adjectives are taken as adjectives for "name" this approves the idea that by "name" the essential names are meant, for only the essential names accept the attributes of beneficent and merciful. Thus, if by name the essential name and the manifestation in the stage of collectively are meant, beneficent, and merciful will be adjectives of the essence, which in the manifestation by the stage of unity are approved for the name of merciful in act is of their reductions and appearances. And if the "name" the collective manifestation

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from the pure Imām [*'a*]). The writing of this noble book was completed in 1349, L. H.

[1] *Sūrah al-Nūr* 24:35.

[2] *Sūrah al-Zukhruf* 43:84.

in act is meant which is the stage of "Will" the beneficence and mercifulness are adjectives of act.

Thus, the mercy of the beneficence is the develop of the origin of the existence, which is general and for all beings, but it is of developing the origin of the existence, God the almighty, is without any partner and the hands of other beings are out of reach of having the mercy of creating: except God there is no effecter in the existence, and except God and there is no God in the house of realization except God. But due to the mercy of "mercifulness", of whose evaluations is the conduct of the guides on the course, it is particularly for the auspicious and the high dispositions, but it is of the general attributes of which other things get their part, though about which was mentioned before, explaining that the mercy of mercifulness is of the general mercies and that the debased enjoys no share of it for their own being evils, not for of any limitation. Thus, guidance and invitation are for the whole human, as is approved by the glorious Qur'an. Similarly another view mentions that the mercy of the mercifulness, belongs merely to God and there is no share for anybody else thereof. The holy traditions have taken into consideration the different views, impressions also are different in expressing the mercy, and impressions are different in expressing the mercy of Mercifulness. Sometimes it has been said; "The beneficent is a special name for a special adjective and in other occasion it has been mentioned; beneficent to all His creatures (he is), and merciful to the believers in particular." and it has been uttered that[1] O beneficent of this world, and merciful of the Resurrection or[2] "Beneficent and merciful of this realm and the Resurrection."

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[1] *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, p. 3; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 89, p. 229.

[2] *Usūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 4, p. 340, "the Book of the Invocation," ch. on "Invoking on Calamities," *ḥadīth* 6; As *Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*, Invocation 54.

A mystical study

The knowledgeable have said that; "Beneficent and merciful have been taken from mercy and that both indicate hyperbole, but in Beneficent the exaggeration is much more than exaggeration in mercy. Analogy requires that mercy must precede Beneficent but because mercy is as a personal proper name and is not applied to the other beings, therefore it stands in prime to the other. It has been said that both enjoy the same conception and being repeated is only for the confirmation. The mystic taste accordance with highest levels of which the Qur'an was appeared, require that mercy must precede beneficent, since the Qur'an according to the people of heart, is the descendant of the divine manifestations and the written form enjoys the divine beautiful names and, as mercy is the most encompassing of the divine names nearest to the supreme name, and as the knowledgeable are sure that the manifestations by the encompassing names are prior to the manifestations by the embraced names and because every name that is more encompassing, the manifestation of which is prior, and also because the first manifestation in the unity is the manifestation in the supreme name of God. Then it turns to the manifestation in the supreme name stage in the beneficent and then that comes the manifestation in the stage of mercifulness. In the same way in the manifestation of appearance in act, it is the manifestation in the stage of "Will" being the supreme name in this scene and the appearance of the supreme name of the essence having priority over all manifestations. Manifestation in the stage of beneficence encompassing all the beings of the invisible and visible realms and to that the verse "My mercy encompasses all things"[1] refers, being to precede other manifestations as the saying "His mercy precedes His fury,"[2] refers to that somehow.

Usually as the *bismillāh* accordance with the inside and the soul being the form of the manifestations in act, and accordance

[1] *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:156.

[2] *'Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 57.

with the mystery and the mystery of the mystery it is the form of the manifestations of Names or rather of essence,, and these manifestations appear first in the stage of God then in the stage of Beneficent" and there in the stage of "merciful" the intonation and written forms must be similar to the divine system.

Considering the Beneficent and the merciful in the Holy verse of *al-ḥamd*, which stands after "The Lord of the realms" probably due to this state that in the *bismillāh* the attention goes to the appearance of the existence from the unseen and hiding places of existence. In the Holy verse the attention is diverted to the revert and the inside. Anyway, in this probability exists a problem. Perchance it aims at the perfection of mercy of "beneficence" and "mercifulness" or it is possible there would be some other point. In any way, the mentioned point related to the *bismillāh* deserves to be believed in, and may be it is beyond the grace of the mercy of the mercifulness given to the heart of this poor person. Praise be to Him due to whatever He has given.

A discussion and an acquirement

The formalist theologians declare that "Beneficent" and "Merciful" have been taken from *ar-raḥmān*, meaning compassionate connotation, and kindness. "These two terms convey compassionate connotation, at the same time one of them is more compassionate; namely, "Beneficent" the compassionate and merciful the kind of His servants giving them livehood and grace.[1] Due to the requiring of an emotion for kindness and compassionate some commentary on ascribing them to the sacred essence has been given. Therefore, that is considered allegorical. Many others consider such adjectives common

[1] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīr bi'l-Ma'thūr*, vol. 1, p. 9. Quoted from *al-Asmā' wa's-Ṣifāt* by al-Bayhaqī.

declare;"[1] Pay attention upon the consequence and ignore the preliminaries. Pointing referring to God almighty, it is on the ground on the effects and acts, and not being on the beginnings and attributes. Therefore, the conception of "Beneficent" and "Merciful" as referred to God is the one who favors His servants mercifully. The schematics consider the entire God's adjectives as mentioned above, or something similar therefore describing them and referring them to God is allegorical too.

However being as allegorical is odd, special in Beneficent. That it should be considered an odd case. The fact is that this term is coined for a conception, which is not apt to be applied allegorically. This is not allowed. Pay attention thereabout. And the learned and the men of study in answering to such problems have said: "The terms have been coined for general conception and the pure facts. Therefore confining to compassion and kindness has no place in within the term mercy and for whatever it has been coined. This attachment has been fabricated by the common belief; otherwise, it has nothing to do with the real conception and coining. And this case, apparently, seems far from research, since it is obvious the one who has coined it, has been of the common persons and the conception and the absolute facts have not been noticed by him while studying it yes, if the coiner would be God the exalted, or messengers accordance with the divine revelation an inspiration, a justification for it could be accepted, but that is not confirmed either. Shortly, the form of this term bears ambiguity, but the researcher's main intention is also indefinite, rather it may be to declare this matter.

It has been mentioned that the coiner of the term though has not paid deep attention upon the general abstract conception while studying, yet, whatever has been coined thereabout are the very abstract general conceptions. For instance, when he wanted

[1] A current proverb. *Asrār al-Hikam*, by Sabzewārī, p. 52.

to coin "light" though he wanted to convey the real meaning but due to his lack of understanding and not seeing the mixture of light and darkness, because of his limited insight he coined merely "light". If he had been asked, "do you mean the term to denote the luminosity or the mixture of light and darkness?" He would have answered: "I meant its luminosity and the darkness the main course of the light never comes in this respect."

As we all know that the coiner who has coined "fire" he has thought of fire—the worldly fire and all. What made him think of such fire in fact was the ordinary fire, because he was lack acknowledge about "The fire kind led by God which rises above the Hereafter. Nevertheless this causes no means of limiting the fact as "fire" points to the quality of the fire, not the coirer wanted to abstract the conception, this seems odd and far from the issue. Rather we say the terms clarify the conception for which they have been coined, being lack of any limitation. In fact, there exist no exception in this case, and the more the conception is free from the aliens the nearer to the truth it will be and more away from the shortcomings of allegory. For instance the term "light" that is the subject, is being coined for being manifest by itself and for manifestation the other, though applying it for the accidental and mundane lights is not away from the truth, since by applying it for them the limits and the mixing with darkness are not meant, and in this case the manifestation and the manifestativeness are meant, but applying it for the heavenly lights the appearances of which are more complete, closer to the horizon of the intricacy and more mighty in manifestativeness both in quality and quantity, their mixture with darkness and blemishes is less, closer to the truth and applying them for the lights of majesty is, for the mentioned reason, nearer to the truth, and applying it for the sacred essence of God, the most high, who is the light of the lights and free from all aspects of darkness, and is more pure light, is the very pure

and absolute truth. Rather it can be said that if "light" has been coined for the apparent by itself and manifesting the other applying it for other than God the exalted is a reality is a reality to the partial understanding, but to the knowledgeable supported and to the learned it is allegorical, and it is really when applied for God only. Similarly are the terms that have been coined for the meaning of completion, such as conceptions like existence and perfection.

Therefore, we say that in "beneficent" "merciful" compassionate "kind" and similar to them there is an aspect of perfection and completeness, and an aspect of emotion and shortcoming, and these words have been devised for that of perfection, which is the origin of that truth. As regards the emotional aspects, which are of the requisites of the growth and odd and alien things of the truth, which after the descent of these truths in the places of possibility and the law mundane realm, are concomitant and entangled with them—take the darkness that when mixes with light in the descending growth have nothing to do with conception of the issue. Therefore, applying it for a being who enjoys the absolute perfection, and who is innocent of all aspects is the mere truth, and the pure truth. And this subject with such description, in addition to its apt to the conscience of the people of literalism as well.

Therefore, it is obvious that such attributes of perfection, which have by descending in some growth been mixed interrelated with another issue—of which the sacred essence of God as innocent—are not allegorical to God, the exalted in their absolute meaning. And God is the Guide.

He utters "*al-ḥamdulillāh*" conveys the whole forms of praise acceptingly for the divine sacred essence. Be aware oh dear that under this Holy term is the mystery of the especial *tawḥīd*, or rather the most special one. And, indeed that the entire forms of praise that the praises offer, exceptionally belong to God, the exalted is quite clear, by reason, to the learned men and

the well-versed in high philosophy, since it is confirmed that the whole house of realization is the expanded shadow of God and his following emanation, and the entire the apparent and covered grace whoever the donor might be, as it seems as the ordinary people think, are God's and no being participate with Him. Even the preparatory taking share in this respect is the view of the ordinary people's philosophy and not remarkable philosophy. Therefore, as praise is offered for blessing, gifts and beneficence, and there exists no benefactor in the house of realization but God the entire praises belong to Him. Similarly there exist no comely and beauty save for his beauty and him, all praises goes to Him.

In other words, every praise is due to a grace and perfection on the other side, in order to the place and the occasion of the grace and the perfection that abates and limit these, they are lack of share in the praise and extolment rather they are irreconcilable and incongruous. Therefore, the entire praises and extolments goes back to the part of divinity being perfection and beauty, no that of the creature, being insufficiency and limitation.

In other words, eulogizing the perfect and obliging and praising the benefactor are of the God-given dispositions, being in the uncountable the entire beings. Among other divine inclinations is the feeling of abhorrence with shortcomings, defect and what lessens the blessing. The absolute grace and the absolute beauty and limit them, not that they extend and support them. Therefore, the whole people are obliged to appreciate and praise the sacred essence of God and ignore the other beings, but those beings who, accordance with their travel through territory of perfection and the city of affection, have been defaced in the Glorious Essence of God, because loving them and praising them one the very loving of God and praising[1] Him. "Loving God's blessings loves God."

[1] *Sūrah al-Humazah*, 104:6-7

Sofar we have described the stage of the common people being still within the cover of multiplicity and have not yet got rid of all sorts of covered and deeply covered, polytheism, nor have they reached the perfect degree of sincerity and purity. But accordance with knowledge of those whose heart having been defaced in certain stages the entire blessings and all perfection, beauty and glorious are the form of the manifestation of the Essence, and the praises as a whole and all thanks belong to the sacred Essence of God, or, another praise and thanks are for Himself, as is referred to by the connection of In the Name of God to "*al-ḥamd.*"

Be aware that the spiritual wayfarer, the striver in the way of God, must not be satisfied with scientific limit of this knowledge spending his entire life investiture which is cover, or rather the greatest cover for covering this distance with "wooden legs"[1] or even by the "bird of Solomon"[2] it seems impossible. It is the of the holy men and stages of the humble without taking off the shoes[3] of loving rank, honor, women children, and, unless he gives up dependence and inclination towards other than God he won't be able to go forward in the sacred valley, which is the abode of sincere followers and the godly men. If the spiritual wayfarer out his foot in this valley with the truths of sincerity. Kicking off multiplicity and this realm—which are fancy upon fancy—must there be in him any remnants of selfishness, a hand from the unseen realm would help him and his maintain of I-ness would be smashed by the divine manifestation and he would endure a condition of "senselessness" and "annihilation". These

[1] This is a reference to a line of poerty by Mawlawī.

[2] This refers to a line of poetry by Ḥāfiẓ, in which he says: "I did not reach the far away palace of the phoenix (of truth) by myself; I could cover it only by the help of Solomon's bird (the hoopoe, i.e. the guide of wisdom)".

[3] A reference to ayah 12 of the *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*: "... put off your shoes, you are in the sacred valley..."

state in the hard hearts—being lack of share and information except concerning this realm, and which know nothing but the Satanic egotism—seem abnormal and eccentric and they describe them fantasies, despite the fact that the abolition which we possess in nature and his realm is odd and more amazing than abolition which the people of mystic and wayfarer claim.

We are unaware of all the unseen realms which from the entire aspects, are more vivid than this realm, or, rather of the Essence and attributes of the Sacred Essence to whom appearance merely belong, while to confirm those realms and sacred Essence of God the Glorious, we cling to affirmation and induction.

Bewilderment upon bewilderment comes from this story; the swoon of the elite is the meanest.

If the term "*akhaṣṣ*" is written with letter "*ṣād*" it is not so bewildered, for the abolition of the imperfect in the perfect is natural and conforms with the divine letter "sin" as this swoon and the abolition are happening to all of us. Our ears and eyes are so absorbed and defaced in nature that we are completely unknown of the unseen realm.

A tradition and a research

Be aware that the knowledgeable and the formalists have said that; "Praising" is thanking by the tongue for a voluntary favor and, as they are unknown of all tongues except this fleshly organ, they consider all praising and glorifying God, or rather all the utterances of the Sacred Essence to be a kind of figurative speech. Similarly, they take the taking, the praising and glorifying God by all beings to the allegorical. Therefore, they consider God's talking to be creating talking, while in the other beings they consider praising and glorifying to be genetic and intrinsic. They believe that talking is, in deed, debarring confined to their own species, thinking that the sacred Essence of God, the Exalted, and other beings cannot talk, or rather they are—God

forbid—dump. They take this to be declaring the innocence of the Sacred Essence, while this is a limitation, or even a disruption and God is innocent of such innocence, as most of the glorifications of the common people are limitation and assimilation. We have already described how the terms were coined for general and absolute conceptions. We add: We are not, anyway, so eager on proving that the divine facts should necessarily come true under linguistic terminological facts, as it is the correctness of the application and the intellectual truth that are principle in such debates, even if the linguistic fact is also confirmed, accordance with the mentioned debates. Thus, we declare that language, talking, speech, writing book, praising, and thanking are diverse degree in portion to the existential growths as each one corresponds to its own growth and degree. And praising in each case, is for a favor and glorifying is for a comely and perfection. Therefore, God the most Exalted, accordance with His self-knowledge, saw, in the unseen Ipseity His Beautiful Beauty, in the most perfect rank of knowing and seeing, he was happy at his Beautiful Essence at the highest degree of delight. Thus, He manifested in the eternal manifestation and the highest degree of manifestation and the highest degree of manifestation in the Essence for the Essence. This manifestation and communicating" is unseen mystery of and the "self-argument" is a "self-speech" which occurs with the tongue of the Essence in the Invisible. Being witness, this spoken manifestation is hearing the Essence. This praising of the Essence for the Essence of Gou is God's praise which the other beings are unable to comprehend such that the sacred person of the Sealing Prophet, the most noble and nearest to God, confess his impotency and says: "I am not able to count the praises for you, You are as You have praised[1] Yourself." It is known that counting the praises is a branch of knowing the perfection and Beauty, but as the complete knowledge of the absolute Beauty is

[1] *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharī'ah*, ch. 5; *'Awālī al-La'ālī*, vol. 1, p. 389.

impossible, like wise the real praise can not be fulfilled. The ultimate knowledge of the people of knowledge and mystic is to confess incapability, the knowledgeable people declare that God, the Exalted, praises and glorifies Himself through five tongues, being the tongue of the Essence as such, the God of the Unseen Oneness, the tongue of the collective Unity the tongue of the "Distinct Names" and the tongue of the entities. These are other than the tongues of manifestness the first of them is the tongue of Volition down to the end ranks of individuations being the tongue of the existential multiplicities.

Beware that the entire beings take part or have share of the unseen realm, which is life only that running throughout the whole House of Existence. This case has been confirmed to people of high philosophy by reasons and to the people of heart and knowledge by guardians of the revelation ('a) refers to it quite clear. The Veiled people of the common philosophy and literalism, who were not able to recognize the tongue of beings, reconstruct to interpretation and justification. It is quite odd the people of literalism who invalidate the people of philosophy foe commenting the Book of God due to their own understanding, they themselves reconstruct in this case, to comment so many of the pain verses and out right correct traditions only due to this case that they were not able to recognize the words of the beings, even without offering a reason at their disposal. Thus, they translate the Qur'an with no proof and only due to the improbability. Anyhow, the House of Existence is the origin of life and the truth of understanding and consciousness. The glorification of the beings is pronunciation and volitional, not genetic, innate, as the veiled claim. All beings are familiar with the state of God, the most Exalted, in proportion to share of being. Now, because there is no being busier with nature and more element in multiplicity than man, he, thus, is more wrapped unveils than other beings unless he takes off his clothes of a human, and pierces the veil of multiplicity and otherness, so as

to be able to witness, unveiled the Beauty of the Beautiful, in which case, his praise and glorification would be more capacious than all praise and glorification, and he would be worshipping God with all His divine affairs and all his Names and Attributes.

Completion

Be aware that the holy words "All praise is for God" accordance with what had already been mentioned is of the whole—inclusive sayings and if, with this fineness and truths one praises human being to observe. Hence, the holy tradition refers to it. Narrated that Imām al-Bāqir (*'a*) once came out a house and found that his mount had gone. He said: "If I find the mount, I will praise Allah as praising deserves." When his mount was found, he mounted, tidied his clothes and said: "All praise is for Allah."[1] The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) is quoted to have said "'There is no god but Allah' is half of a scale, and 'All praise is for Allah' fills the other half of the scale."[2] This is because of what we have said "All praise is for Allah" includes monotheism, too.

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) is also quoted to have said: "The servant's saying, 'All praise is for Allah' is heavier, in His scales, than seven heavens and seven earths."[3] He (*ṣ*) is also quoted to have said: "If Allah gave to one of His servants the entire world, and than that servant said: All praise is for Allah; that saying would be better than what he had been given."[4] Further quotations from him (*ṣ*) say: "Nothing is more loved by

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[1] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 152, "Book of Faith and Disbelief," chapter on Thanking," *ḥadīth* 18.

[2] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 90, p. 210, quoted from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, vol. 1, p. 18.

[3] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, printed by the Ahl al-Bayt Foundation, vol. 5, p. 314.

[4] *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p. 307, section 10, ch. 3 on praising Allah (with a slight defference).

Allah than one's saying: 'All praise is for Allah,' as Allah Himself has so praised Himself.[1] There are many similar *ḥadīth*s."

Allah the Exalted said: "*rabb al-'ālamīn*" (the Lord of the worlds). If "*rabb*" means: "the Most High" [*muta'ālī*], "the Constant" [*thābit*] and "the Master" [*sayyid*], then it is of the Names of the Essence. If it means: "the Possessor" [*mālik*], "the Owner" [*ṣaḥib*], "the Victorious" [*ghālib*] and "the Omnipotent" [*qāhir*], then it is of the attributive Names. If it means: "the Educator" [*murabbī*], "the Benefactor" [*mun'im*], and "the Completer" [*mutammim*], then it is of the Names of Acts.

"*Al-'ālamīn*" (the worlds), if it means: "Everything other than Allah," which covers all the stages of existence and the stations [*manāzil*] of the invisible and visible, then we have to take "*rabb*" to be of the Names of Attributes. If "world" is "the visible world" [*'ālam al-mulk*], which gradually takes place and reaches its perfection, then "*rabb*" means a Name of Act. At any rate, here it does not mean a Name of Essence. Maybe, in a way, "*'ālamīn*" refers to the visible worlds, which attain their suitable perfection under the divine education and management. In this case, the word "*rabb*" means educator, being one of the Names of Acts.

Do know that in this paper we refrain from explaining the linguistic, literary and structural aspects of the verses because others have mostly handled them. Certain points that have not been handled at all, or inaccurately handled, we shall properly deal with them.

It must be noted that the Names of Essence, Attributes and Acts, which have been referred to, are according to the terms of the people of knowledge. A learned man of the people of knowledge, in *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir* has divided the Names into the

[1] Reference untraceable.

Names of Essence, the Names of Attributes, and the Names of Acts. He has said:

"The Names of Essence are: *Allāh*, *ar-Rabb* (the Lord), *al-Mālik* (the King), *al-Quddūs* (the Holy), *as-Salām* (the Peace), *al-Mu'min* (the Faithful), *al-Muhaymin* (the Protector), *al-'Azīz* (the Almighty), *al-Jabbār* (the Omnipotent), *al-Mutakabbir* (the Haughty), *al-'Alī* (the Exalted), *al-'Aẓīm* (the Tremendous), *al-Ẓāhir* (the Outward), *al-Bāṭin* (the Inward), *al-Awwal* (the First), *al-Ākhir* (the Last), *al-Kabīr* (the Great), *al-Jalīl* (the Majestic), *al-Majīd* (The Glorious), *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth), *al-Mubīn* (the Manifest), *al-Wājid* (the Finder), *al-Mājid* (the Noble), *al-Ṣamad* (the Everlasting Refuge), *al-Muta'ālī* (the Most High), *al-Ghanī* (the Independent), *al-Nūr* (the Light), *al-Wārith* (the Inheritor), *Dhu'l-Jalāl* (the Owner of Majesty), and *al-Raqīb* (the Watcher).

The Names of Attributes are: *al-Ḥayy* (the Living), *al-Shakūr* (the Grateful), *al-Qahhār* (the Conqueror), *al-Qāhir* (the Subduer), *al-Muqtadir* (the All-Powerful), *al-Qawiyy* (the Strong), *al-Qādir* (the Able), *ar-Raḥmān* (the Beneficent), *ar-Raḥīm* (the Merciful), *al-Karīm* (the Generous), *al-Ghaffār* (the Forgiver), *al-Ghafūr* (the Forgiving), *al-Wadūd* (the Affectionate), *al-Ra'ūf* (the Compassionate), *al-Ḥalīm* (the Clement), al-Ṣabūr (the Patient), al-Barr (the Righteous), *al-'Alīm* (the Omniscient), *al-Khabīr* (the Aware), *al-Muḥṣī* (the Counter), *al-Ḥakīm* (the Wise), *al-Shahīd* (the Witness), *al-Samī'* (the Hearer) and *al-Baṣīr* (the Seer).

The Names of Acts are: *al-Mubdi'* (the Beginner), *al-Wakīl* (the Guardian), *al-Bā'ith* (the Resurrector), *al-Mujīb* (the Responsive), *al-Wāsi'* (the Expansive), *al-Ḥasīb* (the Reckoner), *al-Muqīt* (the Nourisher), *al-Ḥāfiẓ* (the Protector), *al-Khāliq* (the Creator), *al-Bāri'* (the Maker), *al-Muṣawwir* (the Shaper), *al-Wahhāb* (the Giver), *al-Razzāq* (the Provider), *al-Fattāḥ* (the Opener), *al-Qābiḍ* (the Restrainer), *al-Bāsiṭ* (the Spreader), *al-Khāfiḍ* (the Abaser), *ar-Rāfi'* (the Exalter), *al-Mu'izz* (the Honorer), *al-Mudhill* (the Humiliator), *al-Ḥakīm* (the wise), *al-*

'Ādil (the Just), *al-Laṭīf* (the Subtle), *al-Mu'īd* (the Restorer), *al-Muḥyī* (the Life-Giver), *al-Mumīt* (the Death-Giver), *al-Wālī* (the Patron), *al-Tawwāb* (the Relenting, the Accepter of Repentance), *al-Muntaqim* (the Avenger), *al-Muqsiṭ* (the Equitable), *al-Jāmi'* (the Comprehensive), *al-Mughnī* (the Enricher), *al-Māni'* (the Deterrent), *al-Ḍārr* (the Harmful), *al-Nāfi'* (the Beneficial), *al-Hādī* (the Guide), *al-Badī'* (the Magnificent), and *al-Rashīd* (the Prudent).[1]

Concerning these divisions it is said that although they are all Names of Essence, yet considering the appearance of the Essence, they are called the Names of Essence, and, considering the appearance of the Attributes or the Acts they are called the Names of Attributes or of Acts. That is, whichever of these is more apparent, they are named after it. Consequently, sometimes in a Name two or three aspects appear at the same time, in which case it is regarded as a Name of Essence, Attribute and Acts, or of two of these three, like "*ar-rabb*," as has been said. But this question does not come to suit the writer's taste, nor does it suit the Gnostic taste. What is apparent in this sorting is that the criterion for these Names is that when the spiritual wayfarer with the steps of knowledge reaches the stage of complete annihilation in Acts, Allah, the Exalted, appears to his heart through the manifestations of Names of Acts. After the annihilation in Attributes, the manifestations will be in the Names of Attributes, and after the annihilation in Essence, the manifestations will be in the Names of Essence. Should his heart have the ability of preservation after coming to sobriety, whatever he tells of his seeings of Acts would be Names of Acts. Similarly, whatever he tells of his seeing of Attributes would be Names of Attributes, and likewise the Names of Essence. There are, in this connection, details that do not suit these pages. That

[1] *Insh' a-Dawā'ir*, p. 28.

which is stated in the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir* is not correct according to its own criterion, as is obvious on having a look at the Names.

It can be said that these divisions of "the three Names" are referred to in the Glorious Qur'an, in the last noble verses of the *Sūrah* of Praise." Allah, the Exalted, says: "He is Allah, other than Whom there is no god, the Knower of the invisible and the visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful," up to the end of the noble verses.

Perhaps the first of these noble verses refers to the Names of Essence, the second refers to the Names of Attributes and the third refers to the Names of Acts. Giving precedence to the Names of Essence over those of Attributes, and these over those of Acts, is according to the order of the facts of existence and of the divine manifestations, not according to the witnessings of the people of witnessing and the manifestations in the hearts of the people of heart. It should be realized that the noble verses have other secrets, but to mention them does not suit the situation. That the second verse is the Names of Attributes, and the third is the Names of Action, is quite clear. That "the Knower of the invisible and the visible," "the Beneficent" and the Merciful" are of the Names of Essence, is based on the fact that "the invisible" and "visible" are of the internal and external Names, and "Beneficence" and "Mercifulness" are of the manifestations of "the Most Holy Emanation" [*fayḍ al-aqdas*], not of "the Holy Emanation". Confining these Names to the remembrance of Allah, whereas "Living" "Constant" and "Lord" seem nearer to the Names of Essence, is probably because of their comprehensiveness, as they are of the mothers of Names. And Allah knows better.

A remark

There is a great controversy about the word, the derivation and meaning of the worlds. Some say that the worlds is, plural, covering all kinds of creation, material and abstract, and each

kind is a world in itself. It is a plural that has no singular of its root. This is a well-known opinion.

Some others say that "world "is passive participle and "world" is active participle. So, the worlds mean the known. But not only that this opinion has no proving evidence and is unlikely, it is also quite silly and irrelevant to say the Lord of the known.

Some say that "the worlds" is derived from sign, which covers all being, since everything is a sign and a verse of the Sacred Essence. The letters "*wāw*" and (*nūn*) refer to the rational beings, giving them priority to the other beings.

Others say that it is derived from knowledge. At any rate, regarding it to embrace all creation is correct, as it is justified to take it to cover the rational beings. But is used for everything other than Allah, and is also used for every individual or category. If the one who uses it for every individual and category is of people of tradition and language, he considers every thing to be a sign of the Creator: "In every thing He has a sign... And if he is a divine Gnostic, he considers every being to be the appearance of the all-embracing Name covering all the truths, by way of the appearance of the Collective Oneness and the Secret of the Existence. According to this consideration, the entire world and every part of it can be regarded as the Greatest Name in the state of the Collective Oneness. "The Names are all in all, and such are the signs."

Consequently, the objection of the great philosopher, Ṣadr al-Millat wa'd-Dīn [Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn] (may his soul be sanctified), to those like al-Bayḍāwī is applicable, because they have not tasted of this drink [school]. But to the ways of the people of Gnosticism it is inapplicable. However, as the argument of al-Bayḍāwī and that of the philosopher, on this topic are too lengthy, we refrain from mentioning them. The interested

readers may refer to the exegesis of the said late philosopher on verse praise.

If "*al-Rabb*" is of the Names of Attributes, meaning "Master" or "Owner" and the like, the meaning of the worlds may be "everything other than Allah," whether the owned were the beings of the kingdom of the world, or the abstract invisible beings. If it is of the Names of Acts—as it apparently is—the meaning of the worlds will only be the kingdom of the visible world, as, in which case, "*al-Rabb*" will mean "the Educator"—a meaning which is of gradual effectiveness, while the abstract worlds are innocent of gradualness, though, to the writer, the spirit of "graduation" in the world of eternity, perpetual duration is, in a way, certain; and in the same way, we have also proved the temporal contingency meaning the spirit of time and the eternity of graduation in the abstract worlds. In the Gnostic way, the temporal contingency is also proved for all worlds, but not in the same way as referred to by the theologians and the people of *ḥadīth*.

Another remark

Do know that "praising" is for a "favor". From the noble verse, it is deduced that praising and extolment are confirmed for the state of the Greatest Name as the all-embracing Name, which has the state of being the Lord of the worlds, "the Beneficent," "the Merciful" and "the Master of the Day of Judgment." So, these noble Names, i.e. "*Rabb*," "*Raḥmān*" and "*Mālik*" should have an effective role in the praising. Later on, we shall explain in details Allah's saying: The Master of the Day of Judgment. Now, we shall talk about the proportionality of the state of Divinity to "praising". It is so from two aspects:

The first is that as the very praiser is a part of the "worlds", or he may even be "a world" by himself, and from the point of view of the people of knowledge, each one of the beings is a world by itself, he praises Allah, for He, with the hand of divine

education, has taken him out of weakness, deficiency, fear and the darkness of the mass of non-existence to strength, perfection, security and the luminous world of humanity. He has also taken him past the corporeal, elemental, mineral, vegetable, and animal stations, under a system arranged according to self-and-substantial movements, and the dispositional and natural inclinations, to the station of humanity, which is the honorable station of beings. Furthermore, He continues to educate him until he becomes what you can never imagine in your fancy.

"Then I become non-existent such non-existence that the organ says to me: "Our return is to Him."[1]

The second is that educating [rearing] the system of the kingdom of the world, such as the celestial spheres, elements, substances and accidentals, is preliminary to the existence of the perfect man, who is, in fact, the product of the juice of the world of realization and the ultimate end of the beings of the world, and he is, as such, the last product. And, since the visible world moves according to the substantial self-movement, and this is a self-completing, wherever it ends, it would be the objective of creation and the end of the journey. If we look in a universal way at the universal body, universal nature, universal vegetable, universal animal and universal man, we notice that man is the last product who has been created after the substantial self-movements of the world and they have ended in him. So, the educating (rearing) hand of Allah, the Exalted, has been educating (rearing) man in all the world of realization and man is the first and the last.

That which has been said was about the minor Acts and according to the stages of existence, as otherwise, if taken

[1] Poetry by Mawlawī.

according to the absolute Act, the Act of Allah, the Exalted, can have no objective except His own Sacred Essence, as is proved in its relevant instances. Should we look at the minor Acts, we would realize that the objective of creating Man is the absolute invisible world, as is stated in the Divine Sayings: "O son of Adam! I created all things for you, and I created you for Myself."[1] Allah in the Glorious Qur'an, addressing Moses, son of 'Imrān (peace be upon him and upon our Prophet and his progeny), says: "I have made you for Myself."[2] He also says: "And I chose you."[3] So, man is created for Allah and made for His Sacred Essence. From among all the beings man is the chosen and the elect. The destination of his journey is attaining the door of Allah, annihilation in the Essence of Allah, and sticking to the Court of Allah. His return is to Allah, from Allah, in Allah and by Allah. In the Qur'an, He says: "Surely to Us is their return."[4] Other creatures to Allah through Man, or rather their return is to Man, as it stated in the *Jāmi'ah* invocation, in which some aspects of the states of guardianship are explained. It says: "The return of the creatures is to you and their reckoning is upon you." It also says: "With you Allah opened and with you He closes,"[5] and also in the noble verse: "Surely to Us is their return, and surely upon Us is their reckoning."[6] In the said invocation: "The return of the creatures is to you and their reckoning is upon you," is one of *tawḥīd*'s secrets, referring to the fact that to return to the Perfect Man is to return to Allah, as the Perfect Man is absolutely annihilated and lasts by Allah's everlasting, having no individuality, and selfishness of his of the

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[1] *'Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 381.
[2] Sūrah Ṭā Hā, 20:41.
[3] *Ibid.*, 20:13.
[4] *Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah*, 88:25.
[5] *Uyūn Akhbār al-Ridā*, vol. 2; *al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabīrah*, invocation, p. 272.
[6] *Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah*, 88:25-26.

Beautiful Names and the Greatest Name, to which the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth*s frequently refer.

The Qur'an contains such delicate points, facts, Secrets, and subtleties about *tawḥīd* that the minds of the people of knowledge are bewildered, and this is the great inimitability of this heavenly and luminous Book, besides its excellent syntax, graceful expression, wonderful elegance, miraculous style, the way of inviting and foretelling the unseen, perfecting the precepts, controlling and managing the family and the like, each one of which is independently extraordinary and beyond man's power. It can even be said that the Glorious Qur'an's being distinguished for its eloquence as one of its inimitabilities well-know all over the world was because the weary Arabs were famous for their eloquence, and, thus, they could understand only that aspect of the Qur'an's inimitability. The Arabs of that time could not comprehend its other more important dimensions, which needed a higher degree of understanding. Nowadays, too, those who have a similar level of thinking can comprehend nothing of this divine grace, except its literal elegance, beautiful rhetoric and eloquent expressions. As regards those who are well versed in the secrets of knowledge and the graces of *tawḥīd* and abstraction, know that what attracts them, and what is the goal of their hopes, in this divine Book and heavenly revelation is only its knowledge and theu are not so much interested in its other aspects. Whoever casts a glance at the Qur'an's Gnosticism, and at the Gnostics of Islam who acquired their knowledge from it, and then makes a comparison between them and the scholars of other religions, concerning their works and knowledge, will very well recognize the higher standard of the knowledge of Islam and the Qur'an, which is the base of the foundation of religion and faith, and the final objective of sending the Messengers and revealing the Books. To believe that this Book is a divine

revelation and that its knowledge is divine does not cost him any difficulty.

A faithful awakening

Do know that the Sovereignty of Allah, the Exalted, over the worlds is of two kinds:

The first is the "General Sovereignty," which covers all the beings of the world, and it is the genetic upbringing, which takes every being out of the limits of its shortcomings to its suitable perfection, under the control of the Divine Sovereignty. All the natural and substantial developments and the essential and accidental movements and improvements are under the control of the Lord. In short, from the stage of the primary matter until the stage of animalism and the gaining of the corporeal and spiritual powers of animalism, and the genetic evolution, each one of them testifies, "My Lord is Allah, Glory and Majesty to Him."

The second is the "Legislative Sovereignty," which exclusively belongs to the human species, and the other beings have no share of it. This education is guiding to the roads of salvation, showing the ways to happiness and humanity, and warning against what contradicts them, as explained by the prophets (*'a*). If somebody voluntarily placed himself at the disposal and education of the Lord of the worlds, and was brought up by Him, such that the actions of his organs and powers, external and internal, would not be prompted by his self, but to be divine, in that case he would attain the human perfection, which exclusively belongs to the human species.

Up to the stage of animalism, man goes side by side with the other animals. To step out of this stage he will have to choose, on his own free will, one of the only two ways before him: One is the way to the stage (abode) of happiness, which is the Straight Path of the Lord of the worlds: "My Lord is on the

Straight Path."[1] The other is the way of wretchedness, which is the crooked path of the accursed Satan. Therefore, if he puts the powers and organs of his kingdom at the disposal of the Lord of the worlds to be educated by Him, his heart, which is the sultan of this kingdom, would gradually submit to Him. When the heart becomes a subject to the Lord of the worlds, other soldiers [*junūd*] would follow it, and the whole kingdom would be under His education. Then his invisible tongue, which is the shadow of the heart, would be able to say: "My Lord is Allah. Glory and Majesty to Him," in reply to the angels of the world of the grave, who ask him: "Who is your Lord?" And, as such a man has obeyed the Messenger of Allah, imitated the Imāms of guidance and acted according to the Divine Book, his tongue would be expressive in saying: "Muḥammad (*ṣ*) is my Prophet, 'Alī and his infallible sons are my Imāms and the Qur'an is my Book." But if he did not turn his heart to divinity, and the image of there is no god except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah and 'Alī is the friend of Allah was not engraved on the page of his heart such that to become the portrait of the inside of the soul, and if there was no reciprocal spiritual and moral connection between him and the Qur'an as to act according to it, thinking about it, remembering and contemplating on it, all his knowledge would be effaced from memory when suffering from the agonies of death, the death-sickness, and in the death itself—that monstrous calamity.

My dear! Man, under a typhoid fever and the deterioration of his mental faculties, forgets all his knowledge, except things that have become a second part of his constitution, owing to continual remembrance and close intimacy with them. Should he be inflicted with a serious incident or a dreadful accident, he would be neglecting a lot of his affairs, and the line of

[1] *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:56.

forgetfulness would underline his acquired information. So, how about the agonies, sufferings and difficulties of death? What would happen to him then? If the hearing and the heart were not opened, if the heart was not hearing, to instruct him with the necessary beliefs at the time of dying and after it would be of no awail *talqīn* (reminding the dead of his beliefs) can be useful only to those whose hearts have acquired the true beliefs and whose heart's ears usually open, but at the very moments of death agonies they may undergo a fit of forgetfulness, and thus, the avail will be a means for the angels of Allah to convey it to their ears. However, if man is deaf, with no hearing ears suitable for the worlds of limbo and the grave, he never hears the avail and it can benefit him naught. There is a hint at some of these in the noble traditions.

Ar-raḥmān ir-raḥīm (The Beneficent, the Merciful):

Do know that for all the Names and Attributes of Allah, the Most High, there are generally two states and two ranks. One is the state of the Names and Attributes of Essence, which are constant in His Unity [*ḥaḍrat wāḥidiyyat*], such as the Essential Knowledge, which is of the Essential affairs and manifestations, and the Essential Power and Will, and other Essential affairs [*shu'ūn-e dhātiyyah*].

The other is the state of the Names and Attributes of Acts, which are confirmed for Allah through the manifestation by the Holy Emanation, such as the "Active Knowledge" which the Illuminists regard as confirmed, and on it depends the "Detailed Knowledge". The most merited of the wise men, Khwājah Naṣīruddīn (May Allah make his face bright), has proved this, following the opinion of the Illuminists who say that the criterion for the "Detailed Knowledge" is the "Active Knowledge."[1] However, although this subject is contrary to research—because

[1] *Masāri al-Masārī*, by Khwājah Nāṣiruddīn, edited by Mu'izzī, p. 141.

the "Detailed Knowledge" is confirmed for the Essence, and that the exposure and the details of the Essential Knowledge are higher than the "Active Knowledge" and more extensive, as is proved and confirmed, in its relevant place, by a luminous proof—yet, the original question, that the system of the existence is within Allah's Active and Detailed Knowledge, is proved and confirmed according to the tradition of proving and the method of Gnosticism, despite the fact that the higher method and the sweeter Gnostic taste have, beside such ways, another way: "The lover's religion is other than that of the others."[1]

Generally speaking, for the mercy of "Beneficence" and "Mercifulness" there are two ranks and two manifestations: One is in the appearance of the Essence in His Unity through the manifestation of the Holiest Emanation. The other is in the appearance of the cosmic entities through the Holy Emanation. If the *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*, in the blessed verse, are of the Essential Attributes—as is more obvious—it will be possible to regard them, in *Bismillāh 'ar-Raḥīm*, to be related to Name, rather than Attributes of Act. Consequently, there is no repetition at all that one may claim them to be confirmatory repetition, or exaggeration. Based on this, the meaning of the noble verse will be: With His Beneficent and Merciful will, praise be to His Beneficent and Merciful Essence—Allah knows better. And, as the state of Divine Will is the manifestation of the Sacred Essence, the state of "Beneficence" and "Mercifulness" which is of the determinations of the state of Divine Will, is the display of the Essential Beneficence and Mercifulness. There are, however, other possibilities, which we have left out, as the said one is more obvious.

Māliki yawn ad-dīn (The Master of the Day of Judgment):

[1] The lovers' religion and creed is Allah. (Mawlawī)

Many of the reciters have read: maliki, and there are many literary justifications for both versions, such that even a great scholar (may Allah have mercy upon him) has written a thesis on preferring *Mālik* to *Mālik* But the arguments of both parties are not quite convincing.

That which comes to the writer's notion is that *Mālik* is preferable, or rather, particularly assigned, because this blessed verse and the blessed *Sūrah* of *at-Tawḥīd*, are unlike the other *sūrah*s of the Qur'an, since these two *sūrah*s are recited by the people in their obligatory and non-obligatory *ṣalāt*s, and in every era hundreds of millions of the Muslims have heard them from hundreds of millions of other Muslims, and these from former hundreds of millions, and so on, by hearing these two noble *sūrah*s from one another, recited, exactly the same, with no letter advanced and no letter retarded, no letter increased and no letter decreased, by the Imāms of guidance and the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*). Although most of the reciters read it malik, and many of the scholars prefer malik, yet none of those things damaged this certain, necessary and successively proved fact, and no body imitated them. And although the scholars allowed imitating anyone of the reciters, no one—except the abnormal [*shādhdh*] whose opinion is negligible—necessarily recited malik in his *ṣalāt*s, or if somebody did recite malik, it was as a precaution [*iḥtiyāt*], besides saying mālik, too, such as my learned teacher of the traditional science, Hāj Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Yazdī (may his grave be sanctified), who used, at the request of some of hid contemporary scholars, to recite *malik*, too. Nevertheless, this is too weak a precaution, or, as the writer believes, it is is out of question.

The weakness of the said question becomes clear under the saying that in Kūfī penmanship *malik* and *mālik* are mistaken for each other. This claim can uttered in respect of the *sūrah*s, which are not frequently recited, though still with difficulty, but not in respect of this *Sūrah*, which has been confirmed through hearing

and reciting, as in quite clear. Such a claim is an empty and incredible one.

This very argument is also true in respect of kufuwan, as its recitation with "w" [*maftūḥah*] and "*f*" [*madhmūmah*]—which is *'āṣim*'s recitation alone—is confirmed by way of hearing and rehearing, and other recitations do not necessarily contradict that, though some think that they practice precaution by reciting the version of the majority with "*hamzah*" instead of the "w"—an irrelevant precaution.

If there can be any argument in respect of the narratives in which we are ordered to recite like the people recite[1]—which actually deserves arguing, as it is believed that these narratives wanted to say: recite as the people, in general, do, not that you are free to choose any one of the "seven recitations," for example—in that case, to recite "*mālik*" and "*kufuwan*" other than the way commonly recited by the Muslims and written in the Qur'an, is incorrect. At any rate, the precaution is their recitation as current among the people and written in the Qur'an, because that way recitation is correct to every creed. Allah knows better.[2]

A philosophic research

Do know that Allah's ownership is not the same as the ownership of the servants, nor is it like the kings' ownership of their kingdom, as these are conventional annexations, while annexing the creatures to Allah is not of that kind, although to the jurisprudents this sort of ownership of Allah is longitudinally

[1] Such as: "Recite as the people recite" or "Recite as you have learnt." *Wasā'il ash-Shī'ah*, vol. 4, "*The Book of as-Salāt*," chapter on "*Recitation in the Salāt*" ch. 74, *ḥadīths* 1-3, p. 821.

[2] *Sūrah al-Wāqi'ah*, 56:85.

confirmed. This, however, does not contradict what has been observed in this respect.

Nor does it resemble man's owning his own organs and limbs, nor his internal and external powers, although this latter ownership is nearer to Allah's ownership than the aforementioned ones. It is also not like the soul's owning its own self-action, which is of the soul's affairs, such as creating mental images, whose contractions and expansions are somewhat under the control of the soul's will, nor is it like the ownership, of the intellectual worlds, of what is of lower ranks, even if they were effective in those worlds through annihilating [*i'dām*] and creating [*ījād*], for all the beings of the world of possible realization, on whose foreheads the humility of poverty is marked, are bound by limits and restricted by measures, even to the extent of the essence. And whatsoever is bound by a limit is isolated from its act, in proportion to its limitedness, and it enjoys not a true existential inclusiveness [*iḥāṭah al-qayyūmī*]. Therefore, all things, according to the degree of their own essence, oppose and contradict their passive elements [*munfa'illāt*], and because of this they do not enjoy self-existential inclusiveness [*iḥāṭah al-dhātīyyah al-qayyūmīyyah*].

But concerning the ownership of Allah, the Exalted, which is by illuminative annexation and self-existential inclusiveness, it is the true real self-ownership [*mālikīyyat-i dhātīyyah*], in which there is not the least of any defective contradicting isolation in His Essence and Attributes with any one of the beings. The ownership of the Sacred Essence of all the worlds is the same, without treating the beings with dis crimination at all, or being nearer to, and more inclusive of, the abstracts and the invisible worlds, than of the other worlds, as otherwise it would require limitation and isolating disunity, accompanied by need and potentiality; High Exalted is Allah, the Great, above all that! A reference to this is perhaps in the saying of Allah, the Exalted;

"And We are nearer to him than you,"[1] "And We are nearer to him than his jugular vien."[2] "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth,"[3] "And He it is Who is God in the heaven and God in the earth,"[4] and "Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth."[5] The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) is quoted to have: "If you are lowered down with a rope to the lowest of the earth, you will down onto Allah."[6] Imām al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) is also quoted to have said, as in *al-Kāfī*: "No space can confine Him and no space can accommodate Him, and He is no nearer to a place than to another."[7] Imām 'Alī al-Naqī is quoted to have said: "You must know that when Allah is in the lowest heaven He is, at the same time, on the Throne. All things are equally known, controlled, owned and encompassed by Him."[8]

Nevertheless, although the ownership of His Sacred Essence covers all things and all worlds equally, the noble ayah says: "The Owner of the Day of Judgment." This specification is probably because the Day of Judgment is the day of gathering. So, the Owner of "The Day of Judgment," which is the day of gathering, is (also) the Owner of the other days, which are dispersed, and "the dispersed in the visible world are gathered (collected) in the invisible world."

Or may be it is because of the appearance of the Ownership and Omnipotence of Allah, Glorified be His Majesty, on the "Day of Gathering," which is the day of the return of the

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[1] *Sūrah Qāf*, 50:16.
[2] *Sūrah al-Nūr*, 24:35.
[3] *Sūrah az-Zukhruf*, 43:84.
[4] *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:107.
[5] *'Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 1, p. 54.
[6] Usul al-Kafi, vol., 170, "*Book of al-Tawhīd*," chapter on "movement and Mobility," *ḥadīth* 3.
[7] *Ibid.*, *ḥadīth* 4.
[8] *Sūrah Ghāfir*, 40:16.

possible to the threshold of Allah, and the ascension of the beings to the Court of Allah.

Expanding on this brief as to suit this paper is that as long as the light of existence and the sun of the truth is descending down from the hidden places of invisibility towards the world of visibility, it tends to occultation and being veiled. In other words, in every descent there is a specification, and in every specification and limitation there is a veil. And as man is the composite of all specifications and limitations, he is veiled with all the seven dark veils and the seven veils of light, which are the seven earths and seven heavens, according to interpretations. Perhaps returning to the "lowest of the low" means being wrapped in all kinds of veils. This occultation of the sun of existence , and the mere light in the horizon of specifications can be described as the "night" and "The Night of *al-Qadr*." And as long as man is wrapped in these veils, he is deprived of seeing the Beauty of the Eternity and of eyeing the prime light. When all beings, in their ascending march from the low stations of the world of nature, with the natural movements—which are deposited in their innate constitution from the light of the attraction of the divine disposition, according to the determination of the Holiest Emanation in His Knowledge—return to the original homeland and the real place of promise — as is frequently referred to by the noble ayahs—they once again rid of the luminous and dark veils, and the ownership and the sovereignty of Allah, the Exalted, are manifested, and He appears in Unity and Sovereignty. Here, where the last returns to the First, and the Outside connects to the Inside, and where the rule of the appearance falls and the government of the inside is manifested, the absolute owner addresses—and there is no addressed except His Sacred Essence—"Whose is the

Sovereignty this Day?, and as there is no answer, He says: (It is) Allah's, the One, the Almighty."[1]

This absolute day, the day when the sun of the thruth rises from behind the veil of the horizon of the individuations, is "the Day of Judgment" in a way, since every being, under the shadow of its suitable name, vanishes in Allah. When the Trumpet is blow, it appears from that name and accompanies the followers of that name: "A group in Paradise and a group in Flaming Fire."[2]

The perfect man in this world gets out of these veils according to his journey to Allah and migration to Him, and the regulations of the Resurrection, the Hour and the Day of Judgment appear before him and are proved to him. So, Allah, with His Sovereignty, appears to his heart through this *ṣalāt* ascension, and his tongue becomes the interpreter of his heart, and his appearance becomes the tongue of his internal seeings. This is one of the secrets of confining the Ownership to the Day of Judgment.

An inspiration concerning the *'Arsh*

Do know that concerning the *'Arsh* and its carriers there are different opinions. Similarly, the noble narratives outwardly differ, too, although inwardly there is no difference, since, according to the Gnostic view and demonstrative way, the *'Arsh* covers so many meanings.

One of its meanings—which I did not see in the language of "the people"—is the Unity, which is on the level of the "Holiest Emanation," and its carriers are four names, of the Great Names: The First, the Last, the Outward and the Inward.

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[1] *Sūrah al-Shawrā*, 42:7.
[2] *Usūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 131-132.

Another—which also I did not see in the language of "the people"—is the "Holy Emanation," which is on the level of the Greatest Name, and its carriers are: *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm*, *ar-Rabb* and *al-Mālik*.

Another one of its concepts is the phrase "all that is other than Allah." and its carriers are the four angels: Seraphiel, Gabriel, Michael and Israel.

Another is the "Universal Body", which is carried by four angels who are the images of the Archetypes, as is referred to in *al-Kāfī*.[1]

Sometimes it is regarded to be the "Knowledge," which may be Allah's Active Knowledge which is the state of the great guardianship and its carriers are four of Allah's perfect friends from the ancient nations: Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon our Prophet, his progeny and upon them), and four persons of the perfect ones of this nation: the Seal of the Prophets, Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (*'a*).

Now, as this introduction has been understood, do know that in the noble *Sūrah al-Ḥamd* (the Opening), after the name "Allah" that refers to His Essence, the four noble names: *ar-Rabb*, *ar-Raḥmān*, *ar-Raḥīm*, and *Mālik*, are particularly mentioned, maybe because these four noble names are the carriers of the *'Arsh* of His Unity in respect of the inside, while their outer appearances are Allah's four favorite angels who are the carriers of the *'Arsh* of "Realization" . So, the blessed name of *al-Rabb* is the inside of Michael, who, as *al-Rabb*'s manifestation, is in charge of the provisions and the education in the world of existence. The noble name of *ar-Raḥmān* is the inside of Seraphiel, who is the caretaker of the spirits, the blower of the Trumpet and the spreader of the spirits and the images, as the spread of existence is also in the name of *al-Raḥmān*. The

[1] *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*, vol. 7, p. 32; *Asrār al-Ḥikam*, p. 559.

noble name of *al-Raḥīm* is the inside of Gabriel, who is in charge of teaching and perfecting the beings. The noble name of *Mālik* is the inside of Izrael, who is in charge of taking the spirits and images, and of returning the outside to the inside. So, the blessed *Sūrah*, up to "The Owner of the Day of Judgment," includes the *'Arsh* of Unity and the *'Arsh* of Realization, with reference to its carriers. Thus, the entire circle of existence and the manifestations of the invisible and the visible, which are translated by the Glorious Qur'an, are mentioned up to this part of the *Sūrah*. This very concept is also entirely covered by the *Bismillāh*, which is the Greatest Name. It is also in the "*bā*", which is in the position of causality, and in the dot of bism, which is the secret of the causality. And, as 'Alī (*'a*) is the secret of guardianship [*wilāyat*] and causality, therefore, it is he who is the dot under the "*bā*"[1] That is, the dot under the "*bā*" is the translator of the secret of guardianship. Contemplate. The reason for contemplation is the difficulty that is in the *ḥadīth*. And Allah knows better!

A gnostic notice

Perhaps giving priority to *ar-Rabb* before stating *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm* and then *Mālik* at the end is a delicate reference to the way of man's journey from the material mundane creation up to the complete annihilation, or up to the state of the presence before the Master of the kings. So, as the *sālik* is still at the beginning of the journey, he is gradually being brought up by *Rabb al-'Ālamīn* (the Lord of the worlds), for he is of the world and his conduct is under the control of time and graduation. After leaving the transitory world of nature by the steps of his conduct, the stage of the inclusive names, which do not belong only to the world—in which the aspect of "differentiation" is

[1] *Sūrah al-Zumar*, 39:68.

predominant—is established in his heart. And, as the noble name of *ar-Raḥmān* is more particular than the other, inclusive names, it is stated then, and, as it is the manifestation of mercy and the stage of absolute spreading, it precedes *ar-Raḥīm*, which is nearer to the horizon of the interiority. Hence, in the Gnostic conduct, the external names appear first, then after that, the internal names, because the *sālik*'s march is from multiplicity to singleness, until he ends up in the purely internal names, including the name of *Mālik*. Thus, with the manifestation of Ownership, the multiplicity of the invisible and visible worlds will vanish, and the complete annihilation and Absolute Presence will take place. As he frees himself from the veils of multiplicity with the appearance of unity and Divine Sovereignty, and attains the visual witnessing, he converses in presence (with Allah) and says: "You do we worship."

Hence, the whole circle of the travelers' journey is also contained in the noble *Sūrah*, from the last veils of the world of nature up to the removing of all the dark and luminous veils and attaining the Absolute Presence. This Presence is the *sālik*'s great resurrection and the rising of his Hour. In the noble *āyah*: "... and all who are in the heavens and the earth swoon away, except him whom Allah wills..."[1] the exception may be this group of the people of *sulūk* who would swoon away and be annihilated before the Trumpet is blown. By saying: "I and the Hour are like these two"[2] when joining his two forefingers, the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) may have referred to this concept.

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[1] *Al-Ash'athiyyāt*, p. 212, chapter on "What Necessitates Patience;" *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 39, "Book of Knowledge." *ḥadīth* 72. From Mājālis of Shaykh Mufīd.

[2] "When evil appeared, in the morning and in the evening, naked, and there remained but hostility. We so judged them as they did."

A literary notice

In the current exegeses that we have seen, or which are quoted from, the word "*dīn*" is said to mean judgment and reckoning. The lexicons give these meanings, too. The Arab poets have also used it so, such as the poet who says: "Beware that you will be judged as you judge," and there is a saying ascribed to Sahl ibn Rabī'ah stating:

"There remained but hostility. We so judged them as they did."[1] It is said that "*dayyān*," which is one of the Divine Names, denotes this very meaning. Perhaps by "*dīn*" the true religion is intended. And as on the Day of Resurrection the results of the religion appear and the religious facts come out from behind the curtain, for this reason it is called *yawm ad-dīn* (the Day of Judgment), the same as "today" is called *yawm ad-dunyā* (the day of this world or the mundane day) on which appear the results of this world, while the true image of the religion is not apparent. This bears a similar concept of Allah's saying: "... and remind them of the days of Allah,"[2] which are the days in which Allah treats a nation with force and sovereignty. The Day of Resurrection is a "day of Allah" as well as the "day of religion," since it is the day of the appearance of the Divine Sovereignty and the day of the emergence of the truth of Allah's religion.

Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn (You do we worship and You do we seek help from): Do know, dear, that when the servant, the *sālik* on the road of knowledge, understood that all thanks and praises exclusively belong to Allah's Sacred Essence, and attributed to Him contraction and expansion of the existence, and regarded the reigns of the affairs, at first and at last, the beginning and the end, to be in the grasp of His Ownership, and the Unity of Essence and of Acts manifested in his heart, he

[1] Poetry by Sahl Shaybān, *Jāmi' al-Shawāhid*, chapter on "*F* and *L*," p. 185.
[2] *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:5.

would exclusively confine worship and seeking help to Allah, regard the entire world of realization submitting, willingly or unwillingly, to the Sacred Essence, and recognize no able one, in the world of realization, so as to ascribe to him any help. What is claimed by some of the people of formalism that to confine worship is real, but to confine seeking help only to Him is not real—by arguing that the help of other than Allah can also be sought, and it is in the Glorious Qur'an: "and help one another in goodness and piety,"[1] and also: "and seek help through patience and *ṣalāt*,"[2] and it known that the conduct of the noble Prophet, the Imāms of guidance (*'a*), their companions and the Muslims was based on seeking help from other Allah in lawful matters, such as getting the help of the beast of mount, the servant, the wife, the friend, the messenger, the worker and the like—but a talk suitable to the formalists. But the one who has knowledge about the Unity of Acts of Allah, the Exalted, and regards the system of the existence to be a form of the activity of Allah, the Exalted, seeing, either plainly or by rational proof, that there is no effecter in the [world of] existence save Allah, regards, with the eye of insight and luminous heart, confining "seeking help" to be a real confinement, and takes the help of the other beings to be a form of Allah's help. According to what these people say, there is no reason for confining the praises to Allah, the Exalted, since according to this opinion, other beings also have their behaviors, options, beauty and perfection which deserve praising and thanking. They even say that giving life and death, and providing and creating are some other affairs which are common between Allah and the creatures. The people of Allah regard such matters to be polytheism, and in the narratives they are regarded as a hidden polytheism, as it is said that [resorting to]

[1] *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:2.
[2] *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:45.

turning the ring in the finger to remember something is regarded as a hidden polytheism.[1]

In short, "You do we worship and You do we seek help from" is a part of praising Allah, and it is a reference to real monotheism. The one in whose heart the truth of monotheism has not yet appeared, and he has not purged it from polytheism absolutely, his saying "You do we worship" would not be real, and he can not confine his worship and seeking help to Allah, and he would not be a godly man and a theist. When monotheism manifests in his heart, he will, in proportion to the degree of this manifestation, give up all beings that "You do we worship and You do we seek help from" takes place by the name of Allah; and some facts of "You are as You praised Yourself" manifest in his heart.

An illuminative notice

The point of changing from the third person to the second has become clear from the statements of this thesis. Although in itself it is one of the ornaments of speech and the characteristics of rhetoric, frequently seen in the speeches of the eloquent orators, and is a decoration to the speeches, and, at the same time, by changing from one mood to another, one removes the addressee's boredom and gives a fresh vividness to his spirit, yet, as the *ṣalāt* is the ascension for reaching the presence of Holiness, and the ladder to the state of intimacy, this noble *Sūrah* gives the order to start the spiritual ascension and the Gnostic journey. The servant, at the beginning of the travel to Allah, is imprisoned and wrapped in the dark veils of the world of nature

[1] Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) said: "The (hidden) polytheism is stealthier than the crawling of the ants." He also said: "... of it is (resorting to) turning the ring to remember a thing, and the like." *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, p. 379, chapter on "Rare Meanings." *ḥadīth* 1; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 69, p. 96.

and in the luminous ones of the invisible world, while the travel to Allah is getting out of these veils by the steps of spiritual conduct. Actually, migration of Allah is turning away from the house of self and from the house of creation to Allah, leaving multiplicities, rejecting the dust of otherness and attaining the Unities. It is absence from creation and presence before the Lord. When in the noble verse "Owner of the Day of Judgment" he finds that multiplicity disappears under the shining light of the Ownership and Omnipotence, he experiences a state of effacement from multiplicity and being present before Allah, the Exalted, and, by personally conversing and witnessing the Beauty and Majesty, he offers himself to servitude, and present his quest for Allah and his piety to the Sacred Presence and the meeting of intimacy.

The fact that the pronoun *iyyāka* is used for this purpose is because this pronoun returns to the Essence in which multiplicity is vanished. So, the *sālik* in this situation may have a mood of Unity of Essence, turning away from the multiplicity of names and attributes, and the heart turns towards the Essence that is free from the veils of multiplicity. This is the perfect monotheism which was referred to by the Imām of the monotheists, the head of the Gnostics, the leader of the lovers, the pioneer of the attracted and the beloved, Amīr al-Mu'minīn ['Alī], may Allah bless him and his infallible offspring, who said: "The perfect monotheism is the negation of ascribing to Him"[1] as an attribute denotes otherness and plurality, while this inclination, though to the plurality of Names, is far from the secrets of monotheism and the facts of abstraction. Thus, probably, the secret of Adam's sin was inclination towards the plurality of Names, which was the spirit of the forbidden tree.

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[1] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 191. "Book of Monotheism," chapter on "*General Ḥadīths on Monotheism*," *ḥadīth* 6.

A gnostic inquiry

Be informed that the literalists show some opinions in respect of "*na'budu*" (we worship) and "*nasta'īn*" (we seek help), concerning their being in the first person plural number, whereas the speaker is actually a single person.

They say that, in this connection, a lawful trick has occurred to the worshipper in order to have his worship accepted by Allah, the Exalted. By using a plural pronoun he places his worship among the worshipping of other creatures, among whom, of course, are the perfect ones of Allah's friends whose is accepted by Allah, the Exalted, and presents it to the threshold of Holiness and the Court of Mercy, making sure that his worship will, implicitly, be accepted, since it is not of the custom of the Generous to discriminate in the deal.

They also say that as the *ṣalāt* was imposed first in congregation, so it came in the plural.

Talking about the general secret of the *adhān* and the *iqāmah* we stated a point from which this secret can be recognized to some extent. That is, the *adhān* is proclaiming that the visible and invisible powers of the *sālik* are ready to be present in His Presence, and the *iqāmah* is to have them stand upright before Him. When the *sālik* prepared his visible and invisible powers to be present in the Presence, and the heart, which is their leader, stood upright as their Imām, then the slat has been started and: The believer alone is a congregation."[1] So, "*na'budu, nasta'īn* and *ihdinā*" ("We worship," "we seek help" and "guide us"), all would be performed by this congregation in the Holy Presence. In the narrations and the invocations of the pure infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) who are the source of gnosticism and divine vision, there is a reference to this concept.

[1] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 5, p. 379, "*Book of as-Salāt*," section on: Congregational *salāt*," ch. 4, *hadīth*s 2 and 5.

Another opinion which occurs to the writer is that the *sālik* regards all the praises and thanks from every praiser and thanker, in the visible and invisible worlds, to be exclusively confined to the Holy Essence of Allah. It is also clearly proved in the proofs of the Imāms of proofs, and in the hearts of the Gnostics that all the beings in the circle of the existence—wordly and heavenly, big and small—have the life of sensibility and understanding of animalism, or rather of humanity, and they praise and glorify Allah, the Exalted, rationally and consciously. It is fixed in the nature of all beings, the human species in particular, to submit to the Holy Presence of the Perfect and the Absolute Beautiful, and their foreheads are on the dust of His Holy Threshold, as is stated in the Glorious Qur'an: "... and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him, but you do not understand their glorification."[1] Other noble verse, and narratives of the infallibles, which are full of this divine grace, support this fixed judging proof. So, if the traveler to Allah could find this truth through argumentative reasoning, faithful taste or Gnostic vision, he would realize, whatever position he is in, that all particles of the existence and the dwellers of the invisible and visible worlds, worship the Absolute Worshipped and seek their Creator. Thus, the plural form [of the pronoun] is used because all beings, in all their movements and stillness, worship the Sacred Essence of Allah, the Exalted, and seek His help.

A notice and a point

Know that the reason for giving priority to *iyyāka na'budu* over *iyyāka nasta'īn*—despite the usual custom that seeking help for worship comes before worship—is that "worship" is prior to "seeking help," not to "helping." Sometimes "helping" happens without "seeking help." Also they say that, as these two are

[1] *Sūrah al-Isrā'*, 17:44

related to each other, advancing or retarding can make no difference, as it is said: "You did observe my due, so, you did me good." Or "You did me good, so you did observe my due." Furthermore, seeking help is for future worship, not for present worship. The dullness of these opinions is not concealed from the people of taste.

Maybe the point is that confining "seeking help" to Allah, the Exalted, comes, according to the state of the travel to Allah, later than confining "worship" to Him. It is quite obvious that a good number of the monotheists in worship, who confine "worship" to Allah, are polytheists in "seeking help" and do not confine it to Allah, as we have already quoted some exegetes who believe that confining "seeking help" to Allah is not real. So, confining "worship" to Allah, in its conventional concept, is of the first states of the monotheists, and con fining "seeking help" is an absolute rejection of other than Allah.

It should not be hidden, however, that "seeking help" does not mean to "seek help" only in worshipping, but in all affairs, and this is after rejecting the means and neglecting multiplicities, and completely turning to Allah. In other words, confining "worship" is seeking Allah, wanting Him and giving up turning to other than Him. And confining "seeking help" is seeing Him, and giving up seeing other than Him This "giving up seeing other than Him" comes, according to the station of the Gnostics and the stages of the spiritual wayfarer, later than "giving up seeking other than Him."

A gnostic advantage

O traveling servant, know that confining "worship" and "seeking help" to Allah is also not of the states of the monotheists and perfect stages of the spiritual wayfarer, because it implies a claim contrary to monotheism and abstraction. They even believe that seeing worship, worshipper, worshipped, help-

seeker, the one whose help is sought, and seeking help are contrary to monotheism. In the real monotheism, which appears in the heart of the spiritual wayfarer, such multiplicities vanish, and seeing such affairs is effaced. Yes, those who have come to themselves from the invisible attraction and have attained sobriety, multiplicity does not form a veil for them, because people are of many groups:

A group consists of the veiled, such as we, the helpless, who are wrapped in the dark veils of nature.

Another group consists of the *sālik*s, the travelers to Allah, the emigrants to the Court of Holiness.

A third group consists of the united, who have come out of the veils of multiplicity and have been engaged with Allah, neglecting all creatures and veiled against them, as they have undergone a complete swoon and an absolute annihilation.

Another group consists of those who have come back to the creatures, and who have the post of completers and guides, such as the great prophets and their successors (*'a*). Although they are among multiplicity and in charge of guiding the people, multiplicity does not veil them, but it forms an isthmus-like state for them.

Consequently, "*iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn*" has different implications in respect of the different groups mentioned above. To us, the veiled, it is a mere allegation and an image. But if we become aware of our veil and recognize our shortcoming, our worship becomes more luminous in proportion to the degree of our awareness of our shortcoming, and becomes, accordingly, accepted by Allah, the Exalted. To the spiritual wayfarer, it is nearer to the truth in proportion to the traveling step. To the united, in respect of seeing Allah, it is the truth, and, in respect of seeing multiplicity, it is a mere image and a customary act. To the perfect ones, it is mere truth, and so, they have veil neither against Allah nor against the creatures.

A faithful awakening

Do know, dear, that as long as we are in this heavy veil of the world of nature, spending our life on colonizing the world and its pleasures, and being negligent of Allah, the Exalted, of remembering Him and of thinking about Him, all our worshipping, invocations and recitations will contain no truth—neither in *al-ḥamdu lillāh* (praise is for Allah) we can confine praises to Allah, nor in *iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn* can we find a way to the truth. With these empty claims in the presence of Allah, the Exalted, the favorite angels, the messenger prophets and the infallible guardians, we aill be disgraced and humiliated. The one whose tongue of state and speech never stops praising the people of this world, how can he say, "All praise is for Allah?" The one whose heart is inclined to nature, and is empty of any divine scent, and whose dependence is on the people, with which tongue can he utter: "You do we worship and You do we seek help from." So, if you are the man for this field, then tuck up the skirt of determination, and, with intense remembrance and contemplation of Allah's Greatness, and of the creatures' humiliation, inability and poverty, try first to convey the facts and the delicate matters mentioned in this thesis, to your heart, and enliven your heart by remembering Allah, the Exalted, so as to bring to your heart's sense of smell a scent of monotheism, and, with the help of the Unseen, to find a passage to the *ṣalāt* of the people of knowledge. If you are not the man for this field, at least you are to continually remember your faults, pay attention to your humility and inability, perform your duties out of shame and disgrace, and avoid claiming servitude. And these noble ayahs, with whose graces you are not acquainted, recite them either through the tongues of the perfect ones, or consider yourself merely reciting the form of the Qur'an, so that, at least, you many not claim a false allegation.

A juristic branch

Some jurisprudents see that it is not allowed to intend composition in sentences like *iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn*, thinking that it would be a contradiction to the Qur'an and reciting it, since recitation is relating the words of someone else. This talk has no justification, because as one can praise someone with his own words, he can use somebody else's words for the purpose. For example, if we praised somebody using Ḥāfiz's poetry, it would be true that we have praised the intended person, and it would also be true that we have recited Ḥāfiz's poetry. So, if we, by saying "All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds," actually compose all the praises for Allah, and by saying "You do we worship" we compose the confinement of worship to Allah, it will come true that with Allah's words we have praised Him, and with Allah's words we have confined worship to Him. But if somebody emptied the words from their compositional meaning, he would be acting contrary to precaution, if not to say his reciting would be *bāṭil*. However, if someone did not know it, it would not be necessary for him to learn it, as the formal reciting with its own meaning would do.

Some of the noble narratives refer to the fact that the reciter composes, as is in the *Ḥadīth Qudsī*: "When he [the servant] says in his *ṣalāt*: "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful," Allah says: "My servant remembered Me", and when he says: "All praise is for Allah," Allah says: "My servant praised Me", etc.[1] If the "*bismillāh*" and "praising" were not composed by the servant, "remembered Me" and "praised Me" would have no meaning. In the *ḥadīth*s of *mi'rāj* it is said: "Now that you have arrived, recite My Name[2] [i.e. say the *bismillāh*].

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[1] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 92, p. 226. *Muslim's Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol 2, p. 92, with a slight difference in words.

[2] *'Ilal al-Sharā'i'*, p. 315, of the *ḥadīth "Ṣalāt al-Mi'rāj."*

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[2] *'Ilal al-Sharā'i'*, p. 315. of the *ḥadīth "Ṣalāt al-Mi'rāj*."

From the moods of the Imāms of guidance (*'a*) on reciting "The Owner of the Day of Judgment" and "You do we worship," and from their repeating these verses, it is clear that they were composing, not merely reciting, like: Ismail testifies that there is no god but Allah.[1]

One of the important differences of the ranks of the *ṣalāt* of godly people is due to this very difference in their recitation, as we have already referred to some of it. This, however, would not come about unless the reciter was intending the composition in his recitations and remembrances. Evidences proving this are much more than this. In short, composing these concepts by the divine words is not objectionable.

An advantage

The linguists say that "worship" means utmost submission and humbleness. They also say that since worshipping is the highest degree of submission, it does not befit except the one who is at the highest degree of existence and perfection, and the greatest of the degrees of grace and benevolence, and as such, worshipping other than Allah is polytheism. Probably, "worshipping"—which in the Persian language means "adoration" and "servitude"—actually implies more than that which has been said, i.e. it is submission to the Creator and the Lord. It follows that such a submission is inseparable from taking the worshipped to be the Deity and Lord, or for example, His semblance and manifestation. Consequently, worshipping other than Allah is polytheism and disbelief. However, absolute submission, without this belief or deciding this meaning, even

[1] This is a sentence which, according to narration, Imām al-Sādiq (*'a*) wrote on the shroud of his deceased son. It is said that a group of the Muslims, called the Akhbārīs, who used to literally apply the texts of the *akhbār* [*hadīths*], used to write this.

reluctantly, and even if it reached the utmost submission, would not be a reason for disbelief and polytheism, although some kinds of it are regarded to be harām such as placing the forehead on the dust by way of submission; though this is not worshipping, but it is apparently prohibited. Therefore, the homage paid by the followers of a religion to their religious leaders, believing that they, too, are servants in need of Allah, the Exalted, for everything—for the existence itself and for its perfection—and that they are good servants who, although can have no advantage, harm, life and death for themselves, are, through their servitude, in the proximity of the Court of Allah, the Exalted, and subject to His care, and a means of His grants, cannot be mixed with any blemish of polytheism and disbelief. To respect the favorites of Allah is to respect Him, and "To love Allah's elects is to love Allah."

Among the groups of "I call Allah to witness, and Allah is sufficient as a witness," the group that is—by the blessing of *Ahl al-Bayt* of revelation and infallibility, the resources of knowledge and wisdom—more excellent in unifying, glorifying and exalting Allah, the Most High, than all other groups of humanity, is the group of the Twelve-Imām Shī'ahs. Their books of the principles of belief—such as the honorable book of *al-Kāfī*, and the honorable book of *at-Tawḥīd* by al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (may Allah be pleased with him)—and speeches and invocations of their infallible Imāms, which, in unifying and glorifying Allah, the Most High, are the issues of the said resources of revelation and inspiration, testify that such sciences were unprecedented among humanity, and that no one has glorified and exalted Allah, the Most High, like them, after the holy revelation of the Divine Sacred Book, the Glorious Qur'an, which is written by the hand of the Omnipotent.

Despite the fact that the Shī'ahs, in all countries and times have been following those infallible, pure and monotheist Imāms of guidance, and through their explicit reasoning and proofs they

have known Allah, and glorified and unified Him, yet, some groups, whose heresy is quite clear in their beliefs and books, opened the door of contestation and abuse against them, and, owing to the inner hostility which they had, accused the followers of the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* of polytheism and disbelief. Although, in the market of knowledge and philosophy, this is worthless, yet its corrupting effect is that the incomplete people and the ignorant and the common, may be driven away from the sources of knowledge towards ignorance and wretchedness. This is a grave crime against humanity, which is never retrievable. Concerning this subject, and according to rational and religious criteria, the responsibility of the crime and the sin of this defective, ignorant and helpless group is to be upon the conscience of the unfair who, for their imagined transitory interests prevented the spread of the divine knowledge and precepts, and were the cause of the wretchedness and the adversity of the human species, and rendered all the painful efforts of "the best of men" lost and nil, closing the door of the House of Revelation and the Qur'an in the face of the people. "O Allah, curse then an intense cursing and torture them a painful torment."

"Guide us to the straight path," etc.

Do know, dear, that there is a reference in the noble verse of *al-Ḥamd* (the Opening) to the conduct of the people of knowledge and austerity, and up to "You do we worship" it covers the complete journey from creation up to Allah. When the proceeds from the Manifestations of Acts to the Manifestations of Attributes, and thence to the Manifestations of Essence, and comes out from the luminous and dark veils, and attains the state of presence and witnessing, there happens complete annihilation and full consumption. When the journey to Allah ends by the setting of the horizon of servitude and the rise of the sovereignty of ownership in the "Owner of the Day of Judgment," at the end

of this *sulūk* there takes place a state of establishment and stability, and the *sālik* comes to himself, and becomes sober and attentive to his own state, but as a result of being attentive to Allah. This is contrary to the state of returning to Allah, for attending to Allah was a result of attending to the creatures. In other words, during the journey to Allah he used to see Allah in the veil of creation, and after returning from the state of complete annihilation, which takes place in the "Owner of the Day of Judgment," he sees the creation in the light of Allah, and thus, he says: "You do we worship" giving priority to the object, the addressee, over himself and his worship. And, as in this position, there may be no stability, and slipping can be imagined, he demands his stability and firmness from Allah, the Exalted, and says: "Guide us" which means: make us firm, as was explained.

It must be noted that the said position and the said explanation are for the perfect ones of the people of knowledge. Their first state is that in the state of returning from the journey to Allah, He, the Exalted, becomes their veil against the creation. And their state of perfection is the state of great isthmus, in which neither the creation becomes the veil against Allah, such as we, the veiled, nor Allah becomes the veil against creation, such as the eager united, and the attracted annihilated. So, their "Straight path" is this isthmus situation, in the middle between the two creations (worlds), and it is the path of Allah. Therefore, "those upon whom You have bestowed favors" are the ones whose aptitude has been established by Allah, the Exalted, through the manifestation of the "Holiest Emanation" in His knowledge, and, after complete annihilation, He has returned them to their kingdom. "Those inflicted by wrath," according to this exegesis, are those who are veiled before the union, and "Those who have gone astray" are those who have vanished in the Presence.

As regards the imperfect ones, if they have not yet started their conduct, these matters will not come true in their respect, and their "path" is the apparent religious form. For this reason, "the straight path" is interpreted to mean "religion," "Islam" and the like. If they are of the people of conduct, by "guidance" they mean "showing the way," and by "the straight path" they mean the shortest way of reaching Allah, which is the way of the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) and *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*), as the exegetes say that it means the Messenger of Allah, the Imāms of guidance and Amīr al-Mu'minīn ['Alī] (*'a*) In a *ḥadīth* it is said that the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) once drew a straight line in the middle and other lines at its sides and said: "This middle straight line is from me."[1] The expression "a middle nation" in the noble ayah "We have made you a middle nation,"[2] probably means an absolute middle covering all meanings, including the middle in knowledge and spiritual perfections, which is an isthmus big position and a great middle. For this reason, this station belongs to the perfect ones of Allah's friends. That is why it is in the narrative that by this the Imāms of guidance (*'a*) are intended, as Imām al-Bāqir (*'a*) says to Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah al-'Ijlī: "We are the middle nation and we are the witnesses of Allah over mankind."[3] In another narrative, he also says: "To us returns the extravagant [*ghālī*] and to us refers the negligent [*muqaṣṣir*],"[4] in which *ḥadīth* there is a reference to what has been said.

[1] A nearly similar narrative is related in *'Ilm al-Yaqīn*, vol. 2, p. 967.
[2] *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:143.
[3] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 270, "The Book of Divine Proof", ch. "The Imāms are the Witnesses of Allah over His Creatures," *ḥadīth* 2.
[4] Al-'Ayyāshī's Exegesis, vol. 1, p. 63, *ḥadīth* 111.

An illuminative notice and a gnostic illumination

Do know, you who are in quest of Allah and truth, that when Allah, the Exalted, created the system of the existence and the demonstration of the invisible and the visible, owing to His Essential love to be know in the Names and Attributes, according to the noble *ḥadīth*: "I was a Hidden Treasure, then I liked to be known, so I created the creatures to become known,"[1] He devised a natural love and innovated an inborn longing in the dispositions of all beings, so that by that divine attraction and godly fire of love they may be driven to go in quest of the Absolute Perfection and to long for the Absolute Beautiful. For each one of them He assigned a divine inborn light with which they may find the way to the destination and the objective. These fire and light, the one is the rafrah of arrival, and the other the *burāq* of ascension—both were heavenly mounts of the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*). Perhaps the "*burāq*" and the "*rafraf*" of the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) were the means of this grace [*laṭīfah*] and the corresponding wordly image of this truth, and that is why they were sent down from Paradise, which is the unterior, core of this world.

As the beings have descended in ranks of individuations and have been veiled from the Beautiful Beauty of the Beloved, Glorified His Greatness, Allah, the Exalted, takes them out of the dark veils of individuations and the luminous I-nesses, by the said fire and light and by the blessed name of "the Guide," which is the reality of these means, so that they may reach the proximity of their Beloved, their Real Objective, through the shortest way. Thus, that light is "the guidance" of Allah, the Exalted, and that fire is the divine "assistance" and the journey is on the shortest path, which is the "straight path" since Allah, the Exalted, is on that "straight path." It is probably a reference to

[1] *Asrār al-Ḥikam*, p. 20.

this guidance, journey and destination that the verse says: "There is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock, surely my Lord is on the straight path,"[1] as it is clear to the people of knowledge.

It must be noted that every being has its own path, light and guidance: "The ways to Allah are as many as the breaths of the creatures."[2] And, as in every individuation there is a veil of darkness, and in every being and I-ness there is a luminous veil, and as Man is the meeting place of the phenomena and the collector of entities, he is the most veiled of the beings from Allah, the Exalted. The noble *āyah*: "Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low"[3] is probably a reference to this point. For this reason, the path of humankind is the longest and darkest of all paths. And, as man's "Lord" is the greatest name of Allah, to Whom the external, the internal, the first, the last, mercy, might, and generally, the counter names, all are the same, Man, himself, has to go through the big isthmus stage at the end of his himself, has to go through the big isthmus stage at the end of his journey, and this is the reason why his "path" is the most delicate of all paths.

A faithful notice

As has been said and is known, there are stages and degrees for guidance in respect of the kinds of the journeys of the travelers to Allah and the stages of the conducts of the wayfarer. We shall briefly refer to some of those stages, so that, meanwhile, the "straight path," the "path of the immoderate" and

[1] *Sūrah Hūd*, 11:56.

[2] A *ḥadīth* ascribed to the Messenger of Allah (*s*). Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār*, pp. 8, 95 and 121; Lāhijī's Commentary on *Gulshan-e Rāz*, p. 153; *Naqd an-Nusūs*, p. 185; *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn*, p. 221; *al-Usūl al-Ash'arah*, p. 31.

[3] *Sūrah al-Ṭīn*, 95:5.

the "path of the extravagant", who are those who have been "inflicted by wrath" and those who have "gone astray," can be distinguished according to each one of the stages.

First is that the light of guidance is inherent, as has already been said in the former "notice." In this stage of guidance, the "straight path" is the conduct to Allah without there being any visible or invisible veil, or it is the conduct to Allah without being veiled with body or heart sins, or it is the conduct to Allah without extravagance [*ghuluww*] or negligence, or it is the conduct to Allah without being veiled with luminous or dark veils, or it is the *sulūk* to Allah without the veils of unity or multiplicity. Probably the *āyah*: "He causes whom He wills to go astray, and guides whom He wills"[1] is a hint at this stage of guidance and veiling ordained in the Fate, which, to us, is the stage of unity manifested in the immutable essences. Yet, to expand upon this subject is out of the scope of this paper, or it is even beyond the limits of writing it down: "It is one os Allah's secrets and one of Allah's covers."[2]

Second is guidance by the light of the Qur'an, and on its counter side is extravagance or negligence in knowing it, or stopping at its exterior or its interior, as some of the formalists believe that the Qur'anic sciences are the very conventional and common meanings and the vulgar and positive concepts, and, on the basis of this belief, they do not meditate upon the Qur'an or contemplate it. Their advantage from this luminous Book—which undertakes man's spiritual, bodily, heart and formal happinesses—is confined only to its formal and external instructions. They disregard all those ayahs which enjoin, or recommend, contemplating and remembering the Qur'an and

[1] *Sūrah al-Naḥl*, 16:23 and *Sūrah al-Fāṭir*, 35:8.

[2] Ascribed to Amīr al-Mu'minīn ['Alī] (*'a*). *Al-Tawḥīd*, p. 383, chapter on "Fatalism," *ḥadīth* 32.

making use of the light of it, by which many doors of knowledge can be opened. It seems as if the Qur'an has been revealed only to invite to the wordly pleasures and animal needs, and just to confirm the station of bestial desires.

Some of the esoterics think that they should turn away from the external meaning of the Qur'an and its formal calls—which are the instructions of observing the disciplines of being in the divine presence and how to travel to Allah, of which they are unaware. They deviate from the exterior of the Qur'an, deceived by the tricks of the accursed Iblīs and the evil-commanding soul, believing themselves to be adherent to its internal sciences, despite the fact that the way to the internal passes through observing the disciplines of the external.

These two groups are, at any rate, out of moderation and are deprived of the light of guidance to the Qur'anic straight path, and are ascribed to extremism on both sides. The researching scholars and the learned scrutinizers should both the exterior and the interior and observe the formal and the spiritual disciplines, lighting the external with the light of the Qur'an, and the internal with the lights of knowledge, monotheism and abstraction.

Let the people of literalism know that to confine the Qur'an to the disciplines of the external forms and a handful of practical moral instructions and common beliefs about *tawḥīd*, names and attributes, is unobserving the Qur'an's due respect, and regarding the *Sharī'ah* of the Seal of the Prophets (*s*) as imperfect, whereas no *Sharī'ah* should be thought to be more perfect than that, as otherwise being the "Seal" would be impossible according to the criterion of justice. So, as the Islamic Law is the Seal of the divine Laws, and as the Qur'an is the Seal of the revealed Books, and the last connection between the Creator and the creatures, the facts of *tawḥīd*, abstraction and divine knowledge, which are the original objective and the essential aim of the divine religions, laws and the revealed Books, should represent the last

of the stages and the utmost peak of perfection, or else, there must necessarily be a shortcoming in the Law, in which case, it would be contrary to the divine justness and the Lord's kindness, which in itself, is a dishonorable impossibility and an ugly disgrace, which cannot be washed off the true religions by the seven seas—we take refuge in Allah from that!

Let the Esoterics know that to reach the original objective, the real end, is nothing but purifying the outside and the inside, and without holding to the outer form and the outside one cannot get to the inside. Without wearing the apparel of the outer form of the *Sharī'ah*, the way to the inside cannot be found. So, neglecting the outside means invalidating both the outside and the inside of the divine Law. This is one of the tricks of the Satans of the Jinn and Ins. We have explained some aspects of this point in our book "Explanations of Forty *Ḥadīth*s," as said before.

Third is guidance by the light of the *Sharī'ah*.

Fourth is guidance by the light of Islam.

Fifth is guidance by the light of faith.

Sixth is guidance by the light of certainty.

Seventh is guidance by the light knowledge.

Eighth is guidance by the light of love.

Ninth is guidance by the light of guardianship.

Tenth is guidance by the light of abstraction and monotheism.

Each one of these has the extremes of excessiveness and shortcomings, exaggeration [*ghuluww*] and negligence. To go into details would make it lengthy. The noble *ḥadīth* in *al-Kāfī* may be a hint at a part, or all, of it. It says: "... We, the offspring of Muḥammad, are the moderate type. The extremist would not perceive us, and the follower would not outstrip us."[1] In a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (ṣ), it is said: The best of this Ummah is the

[1] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 136, "Book of Monotheism," chapter on "Forbidding any Attribute...," *ḥadīth* 3.

moderate type, with whom the followers catch up, and to whom the extremists return.[1]

A gnostic notice

Know that for every being of the invisible and visible worlds, and of this world and the Hereafter, there is a beginning and a destination. Although the divine Ipseity is the beginning and the destination of all, the Holy Essence of Allah, the Most High, as He is, would not manifest to the high and low beings without the veil of Names. According to this state, which is a no-state that has no name and no form, and is not qualified with the Names of Essence, of Attributes and of Acts, no creature has any relation with Him, nor any connection and mixing: "How can there be any comparison between dust and the Lord of the Lords!"[2]—the details of this have been mentioned in our *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah*. So, the firstness and the originality [*maṣdariyyat*] of His Sacred Essence are in the veils of Names, and as the Name is the very Named itself, it is, at the same time, its veil, too. Therefore, manifestation in the invisible and visible worlds is according to the Names and is veiled by them. For this reason, His Sacred Essence has, in the display of the Names and Attributes, manifestation in His Knowledge, whose individuals the people of knowledge call "the fixed entities" (figures emblematic of the Names of Allah. Consequently, each nominal manifestation in His Knowledge requires a fixed entity, and each Name has, by the determination of His Knowledge, in the outer world, and appearance whose origin and end are the same Name which is suitable for it; and the return of every being from the world of multiplicity to the invisibility of the Name which is its

[1] *Lisān al-'Arab*, entry "*namat*", vol. 7, p. 416, quoting Imām 'Alī (*'a*).

[2] 'Afīf Usayrān, editor of the book, "Preliminaries" of *'Ayn al-Quḍāt*, on page 276 of that book, has put it as a *ḥadīth*. *Asrār al-Ḥikam* by Sabzewārī, p. 23.

origin and beginning, is its "straight path." So, every one has a special journey and a special path, as well as a predestined beginning and end, in His Knowledge, willingly or unwillingly. The difference of the appearances and paths is due to the difference of the apparent and the Names.

It must be noted that man's "stature" in the highest of the high is the collection of Names. For this reason, he is reduced to the lowest of the low, and his "path" starts from the lowest of the low and ends up in the highest of the high. It is the path of those who are favored by Allah with an absolute favor, the favor of the perfect collection of the Names, which is the highest of the divine favors. Other paths, whether the paths of the happy and the "favored ones", or the paths of the wretched, stand at either end of extravagance or negligence, in proportion to how much they lack of the emanation of the Absolute Favor. So, the path of the perfect man alone is that of those who have been absolutely favored. This path originally is assigned to the holy person of the Seal of the Prophets (ṣ), and, concomitantly, it is confirmed for other holy men [*awliyā*] and prophets. To understand this talk, and the fact that the generous prophet is the Last Prophet, one needs the understanding of the "Names" and the "Entities", explained in the book *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah*. Allah is the guide to the way of uprightness.

Quoting for further information

The dignified Shaykh Bahā'ī (may Allah sanctify his soul), in his *al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā*, says: "Although the favors of Allah are too numerous to be numbered by counting as Allah says: "And if you count Allah's favor, you will not be able to number them,"[1] Yet, they are of two kinds: the mundane favors and the favors of the Hereafter. Each one of them is either natural or

[1] *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:34; *Sūrah al-Naḥl*, 16:18.

acquired, and each one of them is either spiritual or corporeal. So, they are, overall, eight kinds:

First: mundane, natural and spiritual, such as the blowing of the spirit and the emanation of the intellect and comprehension.

Second: mundane, natural and corporeal, such as the creation of the organs and their powers.

Third: mundane, acquired and spiritual, such as emptying the self from low affairs, and adorning it with pure morals and high faculties.

Fourth: mundane, acquired and corporeal, such as decorating with laudable forms and good ornaments.

Fifth: of the Hereafter, natural and spiritual, such as His. Forgiving the sins of us, and His being pleased with those of us who have already repented. This is the exact text of the Shaykh in this example. It seems that it is a mistake on the part of the copier. Probably he meant to say that Allah, the Exalted, may forgive us without first repenting. Refer to it.

Sixth: of the Hereafter, natural and corporeal, such as rivers of milk and honey.

Seventh: of the Hereafter, acquired and spiritual, such as forgiveness and pleasure [of Allah] preceded by repentance, and as the spiritual pleasure which is concomitant to acts of worship.

Eighth: of the Hereafter, acquired and corporeal, such as the bodily pleasures which are obtained by the acts of worship.

The intended favor here is the last four kinds, and the things that are the means of attaining to these kinds from the first four kinds."[1] (The end of the Shaykh's talk, may Allah sanctify his soul).

Nice as these divisions of the Shaykh are, the most important one of the divine favors, the greatest objective of the noble divine Book, has slipped off the Shaykh's pen. He has satisfied

[1] *Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā*, p. 38.

himself with the favors of the imperfect or the medium class. Although in his talk he refers to "spiritual pleasure," yet the spiritual pleasure of the Hereafter which is obtained by the acts of worship is the share of the middle class, if not the share of the imperfect.

Generally, apart from what the Shaykh has said concerning the animal pleasure and the shares of the soul, there are other favors of which three are important:

One is the favor of knowing the Essence and the Unity of Essence, whose principle is the *sulūk* to Allah, and its result is the paradise of meeting [Allah]. But if the *sālik*'s attention is directed to the result, there can be a default in his *sulūk* because this is the state of abandoning oneself and its pleasures, whereas caring for the result is caring for oneself, and this is worshipping oneself, not Allah. It is multiplication, not unification. It is a [Satanic] disguise, not abstraction.

Another one is the favor of knowing the Names—a favor which is ramified in as many branches as the multiplicity of the Names. If its items are individually counted, they will amount to a thousand, and if it is taken in its two-name or multi-name compounds, it will be uncountable. "And if you count Allah's, you will not be able to number them."[1] The unification of Names, in this state, is the favor of knowing the Greatest Name, which is the state of the "Collective Oneness of the Names". The result of knowing the Names is the paradise of Names, [for] each person in proportion to knowing a single Name or many Names, individually or collectively.

The third is the favor of knowing the Acts, which also has infinitely many branches. The state of *tawḥīd* in this stage is the Collective Oneness of the manifestation of Acts, which is the state of the "Holy Emanation" and the state of the "Absolute

[1] *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*, 14:34.

Guardianship." And its result is the paradise of the Acts, which is the manifestations of Allah's Acts in the heart of the *sālik*. The manifestation that happened to Moses, the son of 'Imrān, when he said: "I see a fire,"[1] was probably a Manifestation of Acts, and the saying of Allah, the Exalted: "And when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon,"[2] was a Manifestation of Names or of Essence.

Therefore, the path of those "upon whom favor is bestowed," is, in the first place, "the path" of the journey to the Essence of Allah, and the "favor" in that instance is the Manifestation of the Essence. And, in the second place, "the path" is the conducts to the Names of Allah, and the "favor" in that instance is the Manifestation of the Names. And in the third place, the journey is to the Act of Allah, and its "favor" is the Manifestation of the Acts. The people of these states do not seek the common paradises and pleasures, whether spiritual or corporeal. These states, according to some narratives, are confirmed for some believers.[3]

Conclusion

Know that the blessed *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* (the Opening), as it contains all the stages of existence, also contains all the stages of conducts and, further, it contains, by way of allusion [*ishārah*], all the objectives of the Qur'an. Delving deep into these matters, though it needs a complete expansion and a logic other than this one, yet to refer to each one of them is not profitless, or rather it has many advantages for the people of knowledge and certitude.

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[1] *Sūrah Tā Hā*, 20:10; *Sūrah al-Naml*, 27:7; *Sūrah al-Qiṣaṣ*, 28:29.
[2] *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, 7:143.
[3] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 77, p. 23.

So, in the first place we say that it is possible that "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" is a hint at the entire circle of existence and at the two bows of dissension and ascension. So, "Name of Allah" is the state of the Oneness of "contraction and expansion". "The Beneficent" is the state of "expansion and appearance," which is the bow of dissension, and "The Merciful" is the state of "contraction and covertness," which is the bow of ascension. "All praise is for Allah" is possibly a reference to the world of Might and the Higher Kingdom, whose realities are the absolute praising. "The Lord of the worlds" that concerns "education" and "worlds" which is the state of dedifferentiation, is probably a reference to the worlds of nature, which, by the substance of essence, are moving, passing, and under education. "The Owner of the Day of Judgment" refers to the state of Unity, Omnipotence and the return of the circle of existence. Up to here, the entire circle of existence, descending and ascending, has been covered.

In the second place we say that the *isti'ādhah*, which is an act of supererogation, can be a reference to forsaking other than Allah, and running away from the Satanic domain. And, as this a preliminary [stage] to the other states, not a part of them—since abandoning is the preliminary to be adorned [with virtues], and in itself it is not of the states of perfection—therefore, the *isti'ādhah* is not a part of the *Sūrah*, but a prelude to enter into it. The *tasmiyah* [the *bismillāh*] may point to the state of the Unity of Acts and of Essence, and joining both together. "All praise is for Allah" up to "The Lord of the worlds" may be a reference to the Unity of Acts. Perhaps "The Owner of the Day of Judgment" is a hint at complete annihilation and Unity of Essence, and from "You do we worship" the state of sobriety and return starts. In other words, *isti'ādhah* is a journey from the creatures to Allah, a coming out of the house of the soul. "*Tasmiyyah*" is a reference to "realizing the love of Allah" [*taḥaqquq beh ḥaqqāniyyat*] after taking off creation and multiplicity. "All praise is for Allah" up

to "The Lord of the worlds" is a reference to the journey from Allah, by Allah and in Allah. This journey terminates by "The Owner of the Day of Judgment." In "You do we worship" the journey from Allah to the creatures begins with the attainment of sobriety and return. This journey ends with "Guide us to the straight path."

In the third place we say we say that this noble verse contains the main divine objectives in the Qur'an, since the principal objectives of the Qur'an are: the completion of knowing Allah and acquiring the three Unities, the connection between Allah and the creatures, how to travel to Allah, the return of the divine means to the "Truth of the truths", introducing the divine manifestations, collectively [*jam'an*] and distinctly, in single and in compound, directing the creatures, in *sulūk* and in realization, and teaching the servants, in knowledge, practice, Gnosticism and vision. All these facts are contained in these noble verses, much brief and short as it is.

Therefore, this noble *Sūrah* is "The Opening of the Book," "The Mother of the Book" and the general form of the objectives of the Qur'an. And as all the objectives of the Divine Book return to a single objective, i.e. the truth of monotheism, which is the goal of all prophethood and the ultimate aim of all the great prophets (*'a*), and the truths and the secrets of monotheism are contained in the noble verse of *bismillāh*, so, this noble verse is the greatest of the divine ayahs and contains all the objectives of the Divine Book, as is confirmed by the noble tradition.[1] As the "*bā*" is the appearance of *tawḥīd*, and the dot[2] under it is its

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. 92, p. 238. Three *ḥadīth*s are narrated in this respect.

[2] There may be an objection to our saying: the dot under the "*bā*", that in the Kūfī penmanship which was common when the Qur'an was revealed, there were no dots (in the alphabet). To this, one may say that this fact and reality will make no defference, although its role appeared late, which, in fact, had no effect on the facts. Rather, there is not a decisive evidence in support of

secret, the whole Book, its overt and covert, is im that "*bā*". And the perfect man, that is, the blessed person of 'Alī (*'a*) is the very dot of the secret of *tawḥīd*.[1] There is no *āyah* in the world greater than that blessed person after the Seal of the Messengers (*ṣ*), as is stated in the noble *ḥadīth*.[2]

Completion

Some noble narratives related about the merit [*faḍl*] of this blessed *Sūrah*:

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) has been quoted to have said to Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (may Allah be pleased with him): "O Jābir, don't you want me to teach you the most merited *Sūrah* revealed by Allah in His Book?" Jābir said: "O yes, may my father and mother be your ransom, Messenger of Allah, teach me." He, thus, taught him [*Sūrah*] "*al-Ḥamd*," the Mother of the Book. Then he said: "O Jābir, don't you want me to tell you about it?" "Yes may my father and mother be your ransom, Messenger of Allah, tell me," said Jābir. "It is a cure for every ailment except death," he said.[3]

Ibn 'Abbās related that the Messenger (*ṣ*) once said: "For everything there is a foundation. The foundation of the Qur'an is 'the Opening' is *bismillāh ir-Raḥmān ir-Raḥīm* (In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)."[4]

He is also quoted to have said: "The Opening verse of the Book is the cure for every illness."[5]

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the said claim. Mere convention is not a proof of absolute non-existence. So. think it over!

[1] "I am the dot under the "*bā*"," *Asrār al-Ḥikam*. p. 559.

[2] *Al-Ṣāfī*'s Exegesis. vol. 2. p. 779. commenting on the noble ayah: "About the great event" (*Sūrah al-Naba'* 78:2).

[3] *Al-'Ayyāshī's Exegesis*. vol., 1. p. 20. *ḥadīth* 9.

[4] *Majma' ul-Bayān*. vol. 1. p. 17.

[5] *Ibid.*

Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) is quoted to have said that if the verse of the Opening did not cure a person, nothing else would cure him.[1]

Imām 'Alī (*'a*) is quoted to have said that the Messenger of Allah (s) said: "Allah, the Exalted, told me: "O Muḥammad, We have given you *Sab' al-Mathānī* [another name of the *Sūrah* of the "Opening"] and the great Qur'an."[2] I am graced with a separate favor by the Opening of the Book, which is put on the same level as the Qur'an. Indeed, the Opening of the Book is the honored thing in the treasures of the *'Arsh*, and Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed its honor Muḥammad (*s*), sharing no one of the prophets in it, except Solomon, to whom Allah gave the *Bismillāh* of the Opening *Sūrah*, i.e. *Bismillāh ir-Raḥīm*, as Bilqīs says: "An honorable letter has been thrown to me. It is from Solomon, and it is: In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful."[3] So, whoever recites it, believing in loving Muḥammad and his offspring, obeying its command and believing in its outside and inside, Allah, the Exalted, will grant him, for each of its letters a favor, which is, in fact, preferred to the whole world and whatever is in it of different kinds of properties and good things. Whoever listens to it being recited will get one-third of that which is given to its reciter. So, let everyone of you increase his share of this blessing offered to him, as it is a chance that you must not be late in taking it, otherwise your hearts will regret it much.[4]

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[1] Al-'Ayyāshī's Exegesis, vol. 1, p. 20, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 89, p. 237, *ḥadīth* 34.

[2] *Sūrah al-Ḥijr*, 15:87.

[3] *Sūrah al-Naml*, 27:29 and 30.

[4] *'Uyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 301, under the title: "Concerning the Different Narratives Quoted from Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā," *ḥadīth* 60. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 89, p. 227, *ḥadīth* 5.

Imām al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) is quoted to have said: "It is no wonder if [the *Sūrah* of] *al-Ḥamd* is recited seventy times over a dead and it comes back to life."[1]

The Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) is quoted to have said: "Whoever recites the *Sūrah* of 'the Opening of the Book' will get the reward of reciting two-thirds of the Qur'an.[2] Another narration says: "It will be like reciting the whole Qur'an."[3]

Ubay ibn Ka'b narrated: "I recited to the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) the verse of the Opening. He said: "By the One in Whose life is my soul, Allah did not reveal in the Torah, nor in the Gospel, the Psalms or the Qur'an a *Sūrah* like "The Opening of the Book." It is *Umm al-Kitāb* (The Mother of the Book) and *Sab' al-Mathānī* (the repeated seven. It is divided between Allah and His servant, and it is for His servant to demand whatever he wants."[4]

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān (may Allah pleased with him) is quoted to have said that the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) said: "Allah, the Exalted, may send an inevitable punishment upon a nation. Then one of their children recites: 'All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds,' in the Book of Allah. On hearing this, Allah, The Most High, postpones torturing them for forty years."[5]

Ibn 'Abbās said that once they were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (*ṣ*) when an angel came and said: "Good tidings to you for the two lights which have been given to you, and never given to the prophets before you. They are 'The Opening of the Book' and the seals of the *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. No one recites a single word of them unless his demand is granted.

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[1] *Nūr ath-Thaqalayn Exegesis*, vol. 1, p. 4, commenting on the *Sūrah* of al-Ḥamd, *ḥadīth* 8.

[2] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 89, p. 259. *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 17.

[5] *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, p. 178.

This narrative is also related in "*Majma' al-Bayān*" with the same content.

PART THREE

Lessons on Interpretation of the *Ḥamd Sūrah*

The First Session

I take refuge in God from Satan the accursed. In the Name of God, the Lord of Compassionate, the Merciful.

I have been asked to give one or few interpretation of the Qur'an. The interpretation of the Qur'an is not an easy task for some one like myself to be fulfilled. Rather, the eminent theologians throughout history, both Sunni and Shi'ah have written numerous books on this subject—and their efforts have, of course been most valuable. But each of them wrote from the stand point of his own specialization and skill and could interpret only a certain aspect of the Qur'an, and do that much only imperfectly.

For example, commentaries have been written over the centuries, by such mystics as Muḥy al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī,[1] 'Abd al-

[1] Muḥy al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī: a master of theosophic *Ṣūfi*sm, 560/1165-638-1240. His influence came to permeate the intellectual and spiritual life of virtually the entire Muslim world. The complete but relatively concise commentary on the Qur'an attributed to him appears in fact to have been written by a later *Ṣūfī*, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī; nonetheless, it very clearly bears the stamp of Ibn 'Arabi's thought. In addition, manuscripts survive of partial but more detailed commentaries. See Sulaymān Ates, *Isari Tefsir Okulu* (Ankara, 1974), pp. 177-191.

Razzāq Kāshānī (author of *Ta'wīlāt*),[1] and Mullā Sulṭān 'Alī.[2] Some of these commentators wrote well from the standpoint of their specialization and skill. But what they wrote is not commensurate to the Qur'an; it represents only a few pages or aspects of the Qur'an. Ṭanṭāwī,[3] Sayyid Quṭb,[4] and others like them interpreted the Qur'an in a different way, but their work too does not represent a complete interpretation of the Qur'an with respect to all of its meanings; again, it is concerned only with a single aspect of the Qur'an. There are other commentaries still that do not belong to either of these groups; for example, the *Majma' al-Bayān*,[5] which we Shi'is use, is a good commentary

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[1] 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī: prolific *Sūfī* author, d. 730/1330. Most of his work bears the imprint of Ibn 'Arabi's influence. His best-known work is the Qur'an commentary entitled *Ta'wīlāt*, which has been wrongly ascribed to Ibn 'Arabī. See Ates, *Isari Tesfir Okuku*, pp. 204-211.

[2] Mulla Sultan 'Alī: more commonly known as Sulṭān 'Alīshāh, a scholar and *Ṣūfī*, 125/1835-1327/1909. He belonged to the Ginābādī branch of the Ni'matullāhī order. His commentary on the Qur'an, *Bayān as-Sa'adah fī Maqāmāt al-'Ibādah*, was completed in 1311/1893 and first published three years later.

[3] Tantawi: that is, Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī, an Egyptian scholar, 1287/1871-1358/1940. His commentary on the Qur'an, *Tafsīr al-Jawāhir*, is marked by rationalizing tendencies.

[4] Sayyid Quṭb: leader of the Muslim Brethren in Egypt, 1324/1906-1386/1966. He was martyred by the regime of Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, which accused him of conspiracy against the state, a charge it was unable to substantiate in court. He was a skillful and influential writer and his commentary on the Qur'an, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, is widely read in the Arab world. It places particular emphasis on the relevance of the Qur'an to the contemporary problems of the Muslim world, as well as on its structural coherence. Parts of the commentary have been translated into Persian under the title *Dar Sāyeh-ye Qur'ān*. His work on social justice in Islam, *al-'Idālat al-Ijtimā'iyyah fi'l-Islām*, has been made avaible in Persian translation and has enjoyed in Iran.

[5] *Majma' al-Bayān*: more fully, *Majma' al-Bayān li 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, one of the most voluminous and authoritative Shi'I commentaries on the Qur'an, written by Shaykh Abū 'Alī Amīn al-Dīn Ṭabarsī (d. 548/1153), who also

that includes the views of both Sunni and Shi'a exegetes, but it, too, is not exhaustive.

The Qur'an is not a book that someone can interpret comprehensively and exhaustively, for its sciences are unique and ultimately beyond our understanding. We can understand only a given aspect or dimension of the Qur'an; interpretation of the rest depends upon the *Ahl al-'Iṣmah*[1] who received instruction from the Messenger of God. Recently, people have appeared who, without the slightest qualification for interpreting the Qur'an, try to impose their own objectives and ideas upon both the Qur'an and the Sunni; even a group of leftist and communists now claims to be basing themselves and their aims on the Qur'an.[2] Their real interest is not the Qur'an or its interpretation, but trying to convince our young people to accept their objectives under the pretext that they are Islamic. I emphasize, therefore, that those who have not pursued religious studies, young people who are not well grounded in Islamic matters, and all who are uninformed concerning Islam should not attempt to interpret the Qur'an. If they do so nevertheless for the sake of their own goals, no one should pay any attention to their interpretations. One of the things that is forbidden in Islam is interpretation of the Qur'an according to personal opinion, or attempting to make the Qur'an conform to one's own opinions.

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wrote a number of shorter works on Qur'anic exegesis. See Muḥammad 'Alī Mudarris, *Rayḥānat al-Adab* (Tabrīz, n.d.), IV, 36-41.

[1] *Ahl-e 'Ismat*: those possessing the quality of *'iṣmat* (see p. 156, n. 67). Viz., the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭimah, and the Twelve Imāms. Obviously, the instruction that the Imāms received from the Prophet in the interpretation of the Qur'an was not given to them directly (except in the case of 'Alī, the first Imam). What is meant, rather, is that the Imāms inherited from the Prophet a certain body of teaching concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an, which they enriched as they transmitted it.

[2] See p. 317, no. 105.

Let us suppose that one man is a materialist and tries to make every verse in the Qur'an conform notions, while another is concerned exclusively with spiritual matters, so that every part of the Qur'an he encounters will be interpreted in the light of his preoccupation. They both extremes and attitudes that are to be avoided.

In interpreting the Qur'an, then, we are subject to certain restrictions. The field is not open for anyone to try to impose on the Qur'an any idea that enters his head and then tell people. "This is the Qur'an." Now if I say a few words concerning certain verses of the Qur'an, I do not in any way claim to be expounding their ultimate meaning. What I say represents a possibility, not a certainty; I do not say, "This, and nothing else, is the true meaning."

Because I have been asked, then, to say a few words on these subjects, I will speak briefly every few days or once a week, for a limited period, concerning the opening chapter of the Qur'an or one of the last chapters, for neither people have time for a detailed interpretation of the Qur'an. I will briefly set forth some of the noble verses of the Qur'an, and I repeat that what I have to say is based on possibility, not certainty.

I take refuge in God from Satan the accursed. In the Name of God, the All-compassionate, the All-merciful, praise belongs to the Lord of the Worlds.

It is probable that this phrase, "In the Name of God," at the beginning of all *sūrah*s of the Qur'an is syntactically connected to the verses that fallow it. It is sometimes said that the phrase is connected to an implied statement that follows upon it, but it seems more likely that it is connected to the *Sūrah* itself. So we understand the *Sūrah* of Praise in this sense: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, praise belongs to God."

A name is a sign, Names are given to people and assigned to things in order to provide them with a sign by which they may be recognized and to distinguish one from another. The names of God are also signs of His Sacred Essence; and it is only His names that are knowledge to man. The Essence Itself is something that lies totally beyond the reach of man, and even the Seal of the Prophets,[1] the most knowledge and noble of men, was unable to attain knowledge of the Essence. The Sacred Essence is unknown to all but itself. It is the names of God that are accessible to man. There are, however, different levels for understanding those names. We can understand them at certain levels, but comprehension at other levels is reserved for the *awliyā'*,[2] for the Most Noble Messenger and those whom he has instructed.

The whole world is a name of God, for a name is a sign, and all the creatures that exist in the world are signs of the Sacred Essence of God Almighty. Here some people may reach a profound understanding of what is meant by "signs" while others may grasp only the general meaning that no creature comes into existence by itself.

It is a rationally self-evident proposition, intuitively understood every human being, that no being can come into existence by itself—no being for which it is possible both to exist and not to exist. For such a being to come into existence, there must be a being that exists by virtue of its essence, that is, a being from whom existence cannot be withdrawn, unlike other beings for whom it is possible both to exist and not to exist. There require that something external to them into existence.

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[1] Seal of the Prophet: an epithet of the Prophet Muḥammad, in whom prophethood reached its culmination and perfection.

[2] *Awliyā'*: see p. 361, no. 2.

There are those who say that infinite space existed from the very beginning and that within infinitude, forms came into existence, followed first by vapors and gases and then by forms of life. It is against the dictates of reason, however, that a thing would change into something other than itself without the action of an external cause. Such a cause is always needed for the transformation of one thing into something different, as for example when water freezes or boils. If the temperature did not pass below zero or above one hundred degree (noth of these being external causes), the water would remain just as it is. Likewise, an external cause is required to make water stagnate.

Equally, anyone who reflects a little will regard it as rationally self-evident, and assent to the proposition, that in the case of a thing that may exist or not exist, its non-existence as opposed to its existence does not require a cause. But its transformation from a contingent being that does not exist to a contingent being that does exist is inconceivable without a cause.

As for the proposition that all being in the world are a name and a sign of God, any rational person can understand it in the general sense, in light of our foregoing discussion of causality. But to attain a real understanding of the matter, we must realize that here it is not a question of naming something or someone in order to render it knowable of other-than-itself, as, for example, when we attach a name to a lamp, a car, or a man. For God is a being that is infinite, that possesses the attributes of perfection to an infinite degree, and that is subject to no limitation. A being that is unlimited in this manner cannot be contingent for it is in the nature of a contingent being to be limited. If there is no limitation in the existence of a thing, then, reason dictates that it cannot be other than the absolute and necessary being that possesses all forms of perfection, foe once a being lacks a single form of perfection, it becomes limited and thus contingent. The difference between contingent and necessary being is that the

latter is infinite in all respects and constitutes absolute being, whereas the former is, in its nature, finite. If it turns out that not all of the attributes of perfection are present to an infinite degree in the being we thought necessary, it is no longer regarded as necessary, but instead as contingent.

Now if we take necessary being as the origin and source of all other being, the beings that come into existence as a result of its origination inherently represent the aggregate of its attributes. These attributes, however, exist in different degrees, and the highest degree is that wherein all the attributes of God Almighty are contained, to the extent that it is possible for a world to subsume them. This highest degree of the attributes is represented by the Supreme Name,[1] which consists of the name or the sign that contains, however defectively, all the perfections of God Almighty. Although it is defective with respect to God, it is perfect with respect to all other beings. Beings that are subordinate to the Supreme Name also possess perfection, but to an inferior degree, one limited by their inherent capacity. The lowest degree is represented by material beings, which we imagine have neither knowledge of any form of perfection nor the capacity to acquire it. This belief is not true, however, and is caused by our being veiled from the truth. These beings, which are lower than man and the animals and are deficient, still have the divine perfections reflected in them, but to a degree dictated by their inherent capacity. They even have perception, the same perception that is present in man. "There is naugh but glorifies and praises Him, but you understand not their glorifying." (17:44).

Since it has been considered impossible for material beings to have perception, it has been said that they are an example of

[1] The Supreme Name is generally held to be the name Allah, which is supreme in that it relates to the Essence and all other names are subsumed within it.

static glorification, although the verse just quoted does not indicate this. We know that it cannot be a question of such glorification because they are material beings subject to causes. Traditions describe certain material beings as engaging in glorification, for example, the pebbles that were held in the hands of the Most Noble Messenger.[1] Their glorification of God was a kind inaudible to your ear or mine, and their language and speech were different from ours, yet it still involved perception, perception to a degree dictated by the inherent capacity of the pebbles. It may be that men, who possess the higher degree of perception and regard themselves as the source of all perception, have wished to deny all perception to other orders of being. It is true, of course that those orders do not possess the same high degree of perception, but we, too, are veiled from full perception of the truth. Because of those veils, we are not fully aware, and because we are not fully aware, we imagine many things not to be that are. It is simply that you and I are alien to them. Today many things are becoming known that previously were not. For example, although the vegetable realm was formerly thought to lack consciousness, it is now said that a certain kind of sensor can pick up sounds from the roots of a tree when they are immersed in boiling water. I do not know if this is true or not, but it is certain that the whole world is alive and in ferment.

Everything is a name of God. You, too, are names of God: your tongues are names of God, you hands are names of God. When you praise God, saying, "In the Name of God, praise belongs to God," your tongue is a name of God as it moves. When you get up to go home, you cannot separate yourself from the you get up to go home, you cannot separate yourself from the names of God: you go in the name of God, and you are the name

[1] See *al-Qāsī 'Iyād, ash-Shifā bi Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Mustafā* (Damascus, n.d.), I. 577-578.

of God; the movements of your heart are the names of God, and the movements of you pulse are the name of God. The winds that are blowing are the name of God.

This is a possible meaning of the noble verse we have cited, as well as others where mention is made of the name of God. Every thing is a name of God; conversely, the names of God are every thing, and they are effaced within His being.

We imagine that we have some independence, that we are something in and of ourselves. It is not so. Were those rays of absolute being that every instant create us with an expression of the divine will and a manifestation of God to cease for a second, all beings would instantly lose their state of existence, reverting to their original state of non-existence, for their continued existence depends on His continued manifestation.

It is by means of God's manifestation that the whole world has acquired existence; that manifestation, or light, is the origin and essence of being. "God is the light of the heavens and earth" (24:35), and conversely, the heavens and earth are His light or manifestation; the light of all that exists is from God. Whatever emerges from potentiality into actuality, whatever appears in this world, is light, for the characteristic of light is to appear and be visible. Man appears and is visible, and is light; the animals are light; all beings are light, the light of God. "God is the light of the heavens and the earth"—that is, the existence of the heavens and earth is from light and from God. So destined to effacement in the divine being are the heavens and earth that the verse says, "God is the light of the heavens," not "The heavens are illumined by God," which would imply a certain mode of separation. "God is the light of the heavens"—that is, they are nothing in and of themselves, and there is no being in the world that possesses independence. By "independence," we mean here a being's leaving the stage of contingency and advancing to that of necessity, which is impossible, since God Almighty alone is the necessary being Therefore, when God says, "In the Name of

God, praise belongs to God," or "In the Name of God, say, 'God is One'" (112:1), the meaning probably is not so much that we are to stay, "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as "With the Name of God," where your speaking is a name of God.

Notice, too, that the Qur'an says, "Whatever is in the heavens and earth glorifies Him, whoever is in the heavens and earth..." Whatever exists on earth and in the heavens glorifies God by means of the name that is His manifestation. All beings share in this manifestation; all motion that takes place derives from it, and all that occurs in the world proceeds from it. Since all things proceed from Him and return to Him and return to Him, and no being has anything in and of itself, there can be no question of the independent possession of anything. Is there anyone who can say, "I have something in and of myself," that is, "Independently of the light that is the origin of my being, I have something?" What you have is not yours; even the eye you have is not yours. It came into being through His manifestation. The praise and laudation we offer in concert with all other beings is with the name of God and by the name of God; it is for this reason that God has said, "In the Name of God."

The name God (Allah)[1] is a comprehensive manifestation; it is a manifestation of God Almighty that embraces all other manifestations, including those of Compassionate and Merciful. To put is differently, the name of God (Allah) is a manifestation of God, and the names Compassionate and Merciful are, in turn, manifestations of that manifestation. God, the Compassionate One, created all beings with mercy and compassion, and existence itself is mercy. Even the existence bestowed on

[1] Given the special qualities of the name Allah that are under discussion here; qualities that are absent from all other designations of God, we leave it untranslated.

creatures known to be evil is mercy, universal mercy that embraces all beings; all beings are mercy.

The name God (Allah), then, is the fullest and most complete manifestation; it is a comprehensive name and manifestation. The Essence of God Almighty does not Itself have a name: "He has neither name nor trace."[1] As for the names Compassionate and Merciful,[2] they too are manifestations; they are means whereby the name God (Allah), which combines all perfections in itself, becomes apparent. God has mentioned these two names here because mercy, which has the two aspects they express, pertains to His Essence, whereas the attributes of anger and revenge are secondary.[3]

"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, praise belongs to God." All praiseworthy qualities and perfections, all instances of praise and laudation that exist in the world, pertain to Him and are for Him. When a person eats a meal and praises it, saying, "What delicious food that was," he is praising God even without knowing it. Similarly, if we say of someone, "What a good man he is, what a philosopher, what a

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[1] Arabic expression of unknown provenance.

[2] The names Compassionate (*raḥmān*) and Merciful (*raḥīm*) relate to different aspects of divine mercy. The former manifests itself through the provision that God makes for the material necessities of all creatures by placing appropriate forms of sustenance in the world and equipping them with bodily senses and organs. Since the manifestation of this name makes no distinction between believer and unbeliever, worshipper and sinner; rainfall may be regarded as its outward symbol. The name Merciful is manifested through the sending of revelation and guidance and the granting of salvation in the hereafter: only those who believe in religion and follow it benefit from this manifestation. See al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*, ed. Faḍlou Shihādī (Beirut, 1971), pp. 65-70.

[3] An allusion to the tradition: "My compassion has outstripped My anger," a celebrated *ḥadīth qudsī* recorded by Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Maja, and others. The sense is that mercy is intrinsic to the Essence and thereby has primacy over anger.

scholar!" this expression of praise also belongs to God, even if we are unaware of it. Why is this? Because the philosopher and scholar in question has nothing in and of himself; all that he has is a manifestation of God. If someone has come to perceive something, it is a perception that is a manifestation of God. Likewise, the thing perceived is a manifestation of God; everything is from God. People may imagine that they praise a carpet, for example, or a certain individual, but there is no praise that is uttered that is not for God. For when you praise someone, you do so on account of something he has, not on account of something non-existent, and whatever that person may have is from God. So whatever praise you utter belongs to God.

The meaning of *al-ḥamd*, which we translate as "praise," is generic; it includes all forms and instances of praise, the essence of praise. All belongs to God. We think we praise Zayd or 'Amr,[1] we think we praise the light of the sun or the moon, but that is because we are veiled from ful perception of the truth. We imagine we praise a particular person or thing, but when the veil is removed, we see that all praise belongs to Him and the manifestation we are praising is a manifestation of Him. "Gof is the light of the heavens and the earth." Whatever good exists has come from Him; whatever perfection exists has come from Him. Everything and everyone that we praise is a manifestation of God and they were all created by means of a manifestation. We imagine that we act independently, but God said to the Most Noble Messenger, "When you cast the dust, you did not cast it; rather God cast it"; (8:17)[2] that is, you casting the dust was a

[1] Zayd and 'Amr: two paradigmatic names commonly used in grammatical and legal discussions.

[2] This verse revealed with reference to the Battle of Badr, the first engagement of the Muslim community in Medina with its enemies in Mecca, which took place in the second year of the Islamic era. In the course of the battle, the Prophet cast a handful of dust in the direction of the enemy, miraculously inducing panic in them. The statement that in reality it was not the Prophet

manifestation of God. Similarly: "When they swore allegiance to you, they swore allegiance to God"; (48:10)[1] the hand of God's Messenger is a manifestation of God, but since we are veiled from full perception of reality, we do not recognize it as such.

The only persons who have such a perception are those who received direct instruction from God. I do not have the certainty such instruction bestows, but I can say that one may assume that the expression "In the Name of God" is syntactically connected with *al-Ḥamd* ("praise"), meaning, "With the Name of God, all praise, all laudation, belongs to God and is His manifestation, because He draws it all to Himself in such a way that nothing remains for other-than-Him." Even if you wish to, you cannot praise other-than-God; your praise will revert to Him. If you imagine that you are praising something other than God that is only because you do not know its true nature. However much you try to speak of other-than-God, you cannot; there is nothing to be said in praise of other-than-God, for other-than-God is anything but deficiency.

By this I mean that all things that exist have two aspects: an aspect of existence and an aspect of deficiency. The aspect of existence is light; it is free from all deficiency and pertains to God. The other aspect, the negative aspect or that of deficiency, pertains to us. Now no one can praise the negative; it is only the affirmative—existence and perfection—that can be praised. There is only one perfection in the world and that is God, and there is only one beauty and that is God. We must understand

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but God Who cast the dust means that the Prophet, emptied of personal volition, was a pure instrument for the accomplishment of a divine act.

[1] In the sixth year of the Islamic era, a group of Muslims swore allegiance to the Prophet at Ḥudaybiyyah. When they placed their hands on the hand of the Prophet as the outward sign of their pledge, his hand was a "manifestation of God" because obedience to him was equivalent to obedience to God (see Qur'an, 4:80: "Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys God." and p. 78).

this, and understand it with our heart. If we understand it, not with words or speech, but with our heart, it will suffice us. It is easy to state this truth, but to convey it to the heart and understand it there is difficult. One may say freely, in words, that hellfire exists, and even be convinced of it. But believing is different from being intellectually convinced. Proofs can be adduced, but the reality of belief has nothing to do with proofs.

The quality of *'iṣmah*[1] that exists in the prophets is the result of belief. Once one truly believes, it is not possible for one to sin. If you believe that someone is waiting with drawn sword to behead you if you utter a word against him, you will also become sinless after a fashion, for loving your life, you will never defy the swordsman's. If someone believes that if he backbites with so much as a single word, he will be punished in the Hereafter by having his tongue grow as long as the distance is between him and the subject of his backbiting; if he further believes that the backbiter is fed to the dogs of hell, that fiery dogs will devour him, not with a devouring that has a beginning and end, but one that continues indefinitely in hellfire—if he believes this, he will never engage in backbiting.[2] If (God forbid) we decide to engage in backbiting, it is because we have not believed in the existence of hellfire. A person who believes that all his deeds will assume an appropriate form in the next world, good if the deed is good, evil if it is evil, and that he will be called to account, will necessarily abstain from sin.

We must believe that the backbiter will be called to account, and that paradise awaits the believer and the doer of charitable

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[1] *'Iṣmat*: see p. 156, n. 67.

[2] Backbitting (*qibah*) is defined as mentioning behind the back of another a fault that he may possess but that one would not mention in his hearing. This practice is severely condemned in Qur'an, 49:12, where it is compared to eating the flesh of one's dead brother.

deeds. We must believe this, not read it in a book or comprehend it with our reason, because there is a great deference between rational perception and belief with the heart (by heart, of course, I do not mean this physical heart).[1]

Men may rationally perceive something to be true, but since they do not believe in it, they will not act in a according with it. Only when they believe in it will they act in accordance with it. Faith consists of this form of belief that impels man to action. Merely knowing about the Prophet is of no use; one must believe in him. Likewise with God: establishing proofs of God's existence is not enough; man must have faith, must believe in his heart and submit to Him. Once faith comes, everything else follows. If man believes that a certain being originated this world, that man will be called to account at a later stage, that death is not the end of all things, but a transition from a deficient realm to a perfect one, such belief will protect him all sin. The only question remaining is: how should he believe? The answer is indicated in the Qur'an: "In the Name of God, praise belongs to God."

Again let me stress that the sense I am discussing is possible, not certain; and part of the possible meaning I am suggesting is that if man believes that all expressions and instances of praise belong to God, *shirk*[2] will not penetrate his heart.

As an example, if you hold to this belief, and wish to compose a panegyric for a prince, you will understand that it really pertains to God, because the prince is a manifestation of God. You will be praising that manifestation, because all praiseworthy qualities belong to God. If the prince arrogantly

[1] In addition to the physical heart (often termed *qalb ṣenubarī*, "pineal heart"), there is a subtle heart that stands in an indefinable relationship to it and serves as the organ of faith and inner vision.

[2] *Shirk*: see p. 154, n. 42.

beats the drum of kingship, it will be because he does not know himself; he does not know that he is nothing. "One who knows himself knows also his Lord."[1] If a person understands and believes that he is nothing, that all that exists is He, he will have come to know his Lord.[2]

Our fundamental problem is that we know neither God, nor ourselves and we believe neither in ourselves nor in God. That is to say, we do not believe that we are nothing and that everything is from Him. As long as this belief is not operative, all that the Qur'an has sought to establish will be ineffective.

In our egoistic obstinacy and mutual enmity, we still say, "I possess such-and-such qualities, but you do not." All the empty claims to leadership and so on arise out of enmity, and enmity can exist only when man has his attention fixed on himself. All the desaters that afflict man derive from his love of self, but if he were to perceive the truth of the matter, he would understand that his, self does not belong to him. True love of self, therefore, is love of other-than-self, but is has been mistakenly regarded as self-love. This error destroys man; all the miseries we suffer arise from this misguided love of the self and desire for its exaltation. This desire leads men to death and destruction; it carries them off to hellfire, and it is the source of all sin. When man fixes his attention on himself and desired everything for himself, he becomes the enemy of anyone who stands in his way, and grants others no rights. That is the source of all our miseries.

It may be for this reason—to make it clear that everything is God's and that man had nothing in and of himself—that God

[1] A tradition of the Prophet.

[2] The statement that "everything that is, is He," as well as similar formulations elsewhere in these lectures, should not be understood in a pantheistic sense. It does not mean that God is coextensive with His creation, so that creation enjoys divinity, but rather that other-than-God does not exist: He is the sole reality and the sole existence.

begin the Qur'an by saying, "Praise belongs of God." In other words, we cannot say that only some praise belongs to God and not other praise; I cannot praise you without praising God. "Praise belongs to God" means that all expressions of praise, together with the very essence and notion of praise, belong to God and are His. You may imagine that you are praising something other than Him, but this verse removes the veil from this question and many others that are related.

The whole point is to believe in this verse; if one believes that all forms of praise belong to God, all forms of *shirk* will be negated within the heart.

When he said, "Throughout my entire life I have never committed *shirk*,"[1] that was because he had intuitively perceived the truth, had experienced it with his conscience; it was not something he had been taught, but a truth he had experienced. Proofs are not very effective. They are good, of course, and even necessary, but they are a means by which you are able to perceives something with your reason, as a preliminary to believing in it by means of inner exertion.

Philosophy itself is a means, not and end; a means for you to convey truths and forms of knowledge to your reason to your reason through proofs. That is its sole scope. It has been said, "Those who seek proofs have wooden legs."[2] This means that the leg of rational proof is wooden, while the leg that conveys man and actually enables him to walk is his knowledge of himself as a manifestation of God; it is the faith that enters his heart and his conscience.

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[1] An utterance probably of the Commander of the Faithful. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

[2] A celebrated hemistich from the *Mathnawī* of the great *Ṣūfī* poet Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (604/1207-672-1273). The complete line reads: "Those who seek proof have wooden legs: wooden legs are very infirm" (Book I. line 2128).

When a man achieves such belief, he should always be aware that there are higher degrees of belief still for him to attain.

Let us not be satisfied merely to read the Qur'an and study its interpretation. Let us read every topic and every word of the Qur'an with faith. For the Qur'an is a book that purposes to reform men, to restore them to the state in which God created them by means of His Supreme Name. God is everything in man, although he does not understand that. The Qur'an wished to advance man from the defective state in which he finds himself to the higher state that befits him. This is the purpose for which the Qur'an had been revealed and a all the prophets have been sent: to take man by the hand and deliver him from the deep pit into which he has fallen—the pit of egohhod, the deepest of all pits—and to show him the manifestations of God, that he may forget all other-than-God.

May God grant that we attain such a state. And may peace be upon you, and also God's mercy and blessings.

Second Session

Last time I discussed the possibility that the expression "In the Name of God," in every *sūrah* that it heads, is syntactically connected to the *sūrah* itself, or to the first part of its subject matter. For example, in the *Sūrah* of Praise, the meaning that emerges is "praise in, or by, the name of God." The same expression, then, has a different meaning in each *sūrah*, for in each case it relates to the particular topic that opens the *sūrah*.

In the *Sūrah* of Praise, it is connected with the word "praise" and it indicates the name by which praise is achieved, and the name is a manifestation of God. In the case of another *sūrah*, that of Unity (112), for example, the sense of the expression changes to indicate the name that appropriate to the statement: "Say, 'He is God, One.'"

It is also specified in *fiqh*,[1] that if one wishes to recite more than one *sūrah*, a single recitation of the expression "In the Name of God" at the very beginning is not enough; the phrase must be repeated at the beginning of every *sūrah*. The reason for this is that the precise sense and function of the expression varies

[1] *Fiqh*: see p. 157, n. 81.

on each occasion. Were this not the case, each occurrence would be identical with the next. Indeed, some people have said that the expression does not form part of the *Sūrah* except in the *Sūrah* of Praise, where it has been included in the *Sūrah* because of its blessedness. That is not true, however.

At present we are concerned with the *Sūrah* of Praise, and here the expression is connected with the word praise that immediately follows it. This yields the probable meaning that "praise" *al-ḥamd*)—meaning all instances of praise, by whomever uttered—is accomplished by the name of God; it is the name itself that produces the utterance. All the limbs and members of man's body are names, and whenever man engages in praise, the praise takes place through God's name. Each individual constitutes a different name of God, or the manifestation of a different name.

Notice that there are many differences between the divine agent—which is the agent of existence—and natural agents.[1] One distinctive characteristic of that which emerges from the Divine Principle, which we know as the divine agent, is that in some sense, it is reabsorbed or destined to be reabsorbed into its origin; it has no reality or independence of its own. In order to understand this better, you may compare the relation of the divine agent to the Divine Principle with that of the rays of the sun to the sun. This is not an exact comparison, but it is true insofar as the rays of the sun have no independence with respect to the sun, and the divine agent similarly lacks independence with respect to that Principle of Absolute Good from which its

[1] Divine agent: *fā'il-e ilāhī*. "that which makes the thing caused (*ma'lūl*) emerge from utter non-existence into existence, which bestows perfection without losing it, and from the scope of whose being and the radiation of whose light none may escape" (Mullā Hādī Sabzevārī, *Sharh-e Manẓūmah*, eds. M. Muḥaqqiq and T. Izutsu [Tehran, 1348 Sh./1979], p. 185).

existence is derived—that is, it cannot come into existence or remain in existence independently. If the rays of existence from a being for a single instant it will not be able to subsist for a single instant for just as it depends on the Principle in order to come into existence, it also depend on It in order to remain in existence. Having no standing of its own, then, it is reabsorbed into the Principle.

This being the case, the manifestation of God's names is, in a sense, identical with the names themselves. "God is the light of the heavens and the earth"—the light is the manifestation of God, not God Himself, but the manifestation has no existence apart from the Principal from which it derives; it is reabsorbed in it since it possesses no independence. It is in this sense that we are to understand: "God is the light of the heavens and the earth."

Returning to "praise" (*al-ḥamd*), we see that the definite article has a generic sense, and connection it with the expression "In the Name of God," which precedes it, we concluded that every instance of praise, by whomever it is uttered, takes place by means and that which is praised; from a certain point of view, they are once and the same, the instance of manifestation and the general principle of manifestation. When the Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings) said, "You are as You praise Yourself to be," or on another occasion, "I take refuge in You from You," part of what is indicated is that the one who praises is effaced in the One Who is praised. It is as if God praising Himself, therefore. No one else enjoys any real existence that enables him to say, "I am praising Him"; it is He who praises Himself.

Another possibility is that the definite article in *al-Ḥamd* is not generic in the sense of "praise" being a category applicable to many individual acts. Instead, the sense may be that nature, in its very essence, is deprived of all the characteristics of praise, and that praise resists all individuation. "In the Name of God, the

Compassionate, the Merciful, praise belongs to God" then comes to mean that praise is without individuation and is absolute. This second interpretation is the exact opposite of the first in that the praise we utter does not truly pertain to God, and only that praise pertains to Him that He Himself utters. The praise offered by others is limited and individuated, but He is unlimited. Limited praise cannot pertain to the Unlimited, since it contradicts His nature.

We said previously that nothing can be praised except God. You imagine that you praise someone's handwriting, but in reality you are praising God. You imagine that you praise a scholar, but in reality you are praising God. Whatever praise is uttered, no matter who utters it, reverts to God, because there is no perfection in the world that is not His and no beauty in the world that is not His. Created things are nothing: if the divine manifestation is taken away from them, nothing of them, nothing of them remains; it is by means of that manifestation that they exist. All things are the manifestation of God, and are light. Since there is no perfection other than God's for it is a manifestation of God, and since it is this manifestation that is being praised, other-than-God cannot, in the very nature of things, be praised. There is no perfection other than His, the perfection of His Essence and His attributes. All the perfections that exist in the world are His perfections made manifest; praise of those perfections, therefore, is praise of Him.

According to the second possibility (which is no more than that), "praise" (*al-ḥamd*) does not mean all instances of praise, but absolute praise, praise without any condition or limitation. The praise in which we engage is individuated; it is limited, among other things, by the intention with which we utter it. We have no access to God in His absoluteness in order to praise Him correspondingly. When you say, "Praise belongs to God (*al-ḥamdulillāh*)," you have not fully perceived reality in order

to praise Him. Any praise that you utter relates not to Him, but to His manifestations.

Here again, the second possibility contradicts the first. According to the first possibility, all instances of praise necessarily are praise of Him. According to the second, however, no instance of praise can be praise of Him except His own praise of Himself. If it be the case, the meaning of "name" in "In the Name of God, praise belongs to God" cannot be what we suggested—that you are a name, and everyone else is a name. Instead, the name of God comes to be unlimited manifestation of the Absolute, a sign of the unseen, and it is by means of this name alone that God is praised; that is, He praises Himself. The manifestation praises the One Who makes manifest.

All of this, then, represents another possibility. On the one hand, "praise" (*al-ḥamd*) may mean all instances of praise; on the other, it may mean absolute and undifferentiated praise. The first possibility is that all instances of pride cannot relate to other-than-God, and the second is that no praise, being limited, can relate to God, Who is absolute. This second possibility means further that absolute and undifferentiated praise is His by means of the name that is appropriate to Him.

A third possibility mentioned by some people is that the expression "In the Name of God" is not connected to the *Sūrah* at all, but relates only to the manifestation of being. That is, whatever comes into existence does so by means of the name of God; the name is the origin from which the manifestation of all beings derives.

It may be possible to connect this interpretation with the tradition that says, "God created will by means of itself, and He created other things by means of His will." Here, will represents the first manifestation of God, created "by means of itself" (that is, without any intermediary), and everything else came into being by means of the will. Similarly, according to our third possibility—which rejects any syntactic connection between "In

the Name of God's" and the *sūrah*, but connects it instead to something outside the *sūrah*—"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" is the means whereby things attain existence.

Those who have examined the Qur'an using the method of the grammarians have suggested that the sense of "In the Name of God" is: "I seek God's aid," or something similar. Now even if that is the meaning, still the concept of name must be present, whatever or not they are aware of it, for whoever seeks God's said does by the invocation of His name; he cannot do so without it. This does not mean that "In the Name of God" is a simple verbal formula of invocation; for the "Name of God" means His manifestation in all things, and the one who seek God's help, invoking His name, is in fact seeking His aid by means of His manifestation. All things are by means of His manifestation, so that this interpretation, too, refers matters back to God.

So much for the syntactic relationship of "In the Name of God." As for the sense of "name," I have already said that it is the sign of the thing that it names. Whatever you may imagine to exist, its name is a manifestation or gign of it.

Not all names are equal in this respect. There are names that are signs in the fullest sense of the word, and others that function at a lower degree. All things are signs and manifestations, manifestation of the name, but to different degrees.

There is a tradition that states: "We are the Most Beautiful Names",[1] that is, the Supreme Name manifests itself as the Most Noble Messenger and the Immaculate Imāms, those who have attained the degree of advancement from deficiency to perfection, who have liberated themselves from nature and all things. They are not like us, who are still in the pit and have not

[1] Tradition ascribed to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.

even begun to walk on the path. They have left the pit and are advancing on the path; they have migrated.

"When anyone leaves his home, migrating to God and His Messenger, and is then overtaken by death, it is incumbent on God to reward him."[1] One possible meaning this tradition is that the migration referred to is a migration from the self toward God, and the home mentioned is man man's selfhood. There is a class of men who have left their dark home of egohood and migrated from it, "migrating to God and His Messenger," and they are then "overtaken by death"—that is, they reach a point where there is no longer anything of themselves; i.e. absolute death. Their reward is incumbent upon God; there is no question of any other reward, neither paradise with its bounties nor anything else, save God Himself. If a person departs from the home of egohood and migrates to God and His Messenger (migrating to the Messenger being a form migrating to God), and then reaches a state where he is "overtaken by death," where nothing remains of his self and he sees all things as coming from God—if he engages in such a migration, then it is incumbent upon God to reward him.

There is a class of people who have accomplished this: they have migrated in this way; and attained their goal (although in another sense their migration is continuing),[2] and it had become incumbent upon God to reward them. There are others who have migrated but not yet reached the goal of being "overtaken by death." And then is still another group—to which you and I

[1] For a similar interpretation of this verse by the *Ṣūfī* ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 526/1137), see *Namahat-e* ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, eds. ʿA. Munzawī and ʿA. ʿUsayrān (Tehran, 1350 Sh./1972), II, 24.

[2] In the othere sense, their migration is continuing because given the infinity of the divine being, there is no question of His constituting a destination that sooner or later may be reached.

belong—that has not even begun to migrate.[1] We are still caught up in the darkness; we are captives in the pit of attachment to the world, to nature, and, worst of all, to our own egos. We are enclosed in our home of selfhood, and all that exists for us is our selves. Whatever we want, we want for ourselves. The thought of misgrating has not even occurred to us; all our thoughts are devoted to this world. We do not return to God the trust of the strength and energy. He has put in us,[2] but expend all of it for the sake of this world. As time goes on, we become more and more distant from our point of origin, that place toward which we are supposed to migrate.

According to a tradition, the Prophet was once seated with his Companions when suddenly they heard a noise. They asked him what it is was and he told them, "Once a stone fell into hellfire, and now, seventy years later, it has reached the bottom, making the sound you just heard." By this the Prophet was referring to a man who had sinned for seventy years and just died. I, too, have traveled in the same direction, but for eighty years, not seventy; and you have, too, for differing numbers of year. I hope that henceforth you will in the opposite direction.

Anything that afflicts us is caused by our love of self, our egoism. There is a welk-known saying: "The most hostile of your enemies is your self, enclosed between your two sides."[3] Your self is worse than all your enemies, worse than all idols. It is, in fact, the chief of all idols, compelling you to worship it with a greater force than that of all other idols. Until one breaks

[1] Imām Khomeinī's inclusion of himself in the group pf those who have "not even begun to migrate" should be taken neither as an accurate description of his state nor as formal self-deprecation. Instead, it is an expression of genuine humility and, at the same time, self-identification with his audience for didactic purposes.

[2] Cf. Qur'an, 4:58: "God commands you to return trusts to their possessors."

[3] A tradition recorded by Bayhaqī.

this idol, one cannot turn to God; the idol and God, egoism and divinity, cannot coexist within you. Unless we leave this idol temple, turn our backs on this idol, and set our faces toward God Almighty, we will in reality idolaters, even though we may outwardly worship God. We say "God" with our tongues, but our selves are what is in our hearts. When we stand in prayer we say, "You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help,"[1] but in reality it is our selves that we are worshipping. I mean that we are exclusively concerned with ourselves, and desire everything for ourselves.

All the problems besetting the world, including wars, arise from this egoism. True believers[2] will not got to war with each other; if war breaks out between two people, they must realize that they are not believers. When there is no belief, but only attention to self, concern for the self and its desires, then trouble arises. I want this seat for myself; conflicts arise, for these are incompatible. I may want a carpet for myself, or some position of leadership, which you desire equally for yourself, so that a dispute ensues between us. Someone wants to rule a country himself; another harbors the same desire, so war breaks out between them. All wars that take place in the worlds are wars between opposing egos.

The *awliyā'* are exempt from this egoism, and no war takes place among them. If they were all gathered together, neither strife nor dispute would occur among them, for they are all devoted entirely to a single aim, God, and nothing remains of

[1] Qur'an, 1:5.

[2] These remarks should not be taken to imply a total disavowal of war. They are intended rather to condemn the wars that arise from two competing egoisms, which disregard divine norms, not the wars waged by thruth against falsehood or the wars the Islamic state may find itself compelled to wage. For clarification, see the discussion of the conflict between Moses and the Pharaoh on pp. 419-420.

their selfhood that might cause them to pull in different directions. But we are trapped in a pit in darkness of the worst kind, the darkness of egoism. Yes, we are caught in a dark pit of egoism. We are preoccupied with our own desires and ourselves and while we are willing to consider harm for others if it is to our benefit, we refuse to accept what is proper and right if it threatens our interests. We also believe immediately whatever we think is to our benefit, but refuse to believe anything contrary to our interests.

All human sufferings are caused by egoism of these and other forms; people pull in different directions dictated by their own selfish desires. As long as matters continue this way, there will be no question of worshipping God, but only the self.

Who can escape this temple of the self, this idol-temple that is situated within man himself? Man needs a helping hand from the world of the unseen to reach him and lead him out. It is precisely for this purpose, to lead man out of his idol-temple that all the prophets have been sent and all the heavenly books revealed. They have enabled man to shatter the idol and being worshipping God.

The prophets all came to make this world a divine world after it had been a satanic world, a world governed by Satan. It is Satan that is ruling us, too; we follow him, and our vain desires are a manifestation of him. As long as that great Satan that is our unredeemed soul exists within us, whatever we do will be done in egoism. We must destroy the government of Satan within us.

When we migrate to the teachings of the prophets and the *awliyā'*, turn our backs on egoism, we will have begun to emerge from the pit. Some will even succeed, while still in this world, in reaching a stage that is now beyond our imagination—that of non-being, of effaced in God. We must desire to make this migration from egoism, and be prepared to struggle in order to migrate.

The Prophet said, "You have now returned from the lesser *jihād*; the greater *jihād* still remains as duty for you."[1] All forms of *jihād* that may be waged in the world depend on this greater jugad; if we succeed in the greater *jihād*, then all our other strivings will count as *jihād*, and if not, they will be satanic. Some who waged *jihād* may have been given simply a slave girl as their just reward, whereas others who made the migration to God received God as their reward.

There are different categories of deeds. The deeds of the *awliyā'* are completely different from our deeds because of the source from which they spring. It is said of the Commander of the Faithful, for example, that a single blow struck by him during the Battle of the Ditch[2] was better than all the deeds of worship performed by both men and jinn. Part of the explanation is, of course, that the blow he delivered that day to kill an enemy was struck during a confrontation between Islam and all the forces of *kufr*;[3] if Islam had been defeated on that day, it would have been destroyed. The other part of the explanation, however, lies in his pure intention, sincerity, and absorption in God. Was this not the same Commander of the Faithful who once rose from the breast of an enemy he was about to kill, because the man spat in his face and he feared that his deed might be diminished by egoism. When such meticulous concern for the right motive inspires a deed, the spirit of that deed will indeed exceed all possible acts of worship, for is that spirit that makes worship truly worship.

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[1] The lesser *jihād* is the struggle against the visible enemy in the battlefield, and the greater or supreme *jihād* is the ceaseless war man is called upon to wage against his lower self. See p. 349.

[2] Battle of the Ditch: a battle fought in the fifth year of the Islamic era against the Meccan polytheists and their allies who sought to conquer Medina. The battle was so called because of the ditch dug arround the city as a defensive measure. See also p. 160, n. 123.

[3] *Kufr*: see p. 153, n. 40.

Polytheists and monotheists, those who worship idols and those who do not, may resemble each other outwardly. Abū Sufyān[1] used to pray, and Mu'āwiyah[2] even used to lead the congregation in prayer. These outward appearances are of no value in themselves. What elevates prayer is the spirit that animates it. If that spirit is present, prayer ascends to the divine presence and itself becomes divine.

But we engage in worship for our own sakes. At most, if one of us is very good, he engages in worship for the sake of paradise. But take away paradise and see how many people will be left praying! One should aspire to the state of the Commander of the Faithful, who was "enamored of worship and embraced it."[3] There is no question of paradise for him; he is unaware of it, having died, or been "overtaken by death." Since he no longer has any consciousness of the self, paradise and hell are equal in his view. His worship and praise are devoted exclusively to the Essence of God Almighty, for he has recognized God as deserving to be worshipped. This is the degree of a person who is "enamored of worship"; he worship God because He deserves to be worshipped.

This, then, is the first step: to quit your home of egoism, to take a step in the direction of God. We must awaken from our sleep, for it is only the animal dimension of our being that is now awake; the human dimension is sound asleep.

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[1] Abū Sufyān: the leader of the Meccan opposition to the Prophet for many years who later accepted Islam when it became apparent that the Muslims were about to conquer Mecca. He died during the caliphate of 'Uthmān, at the age of 88.

[2] Mu'āwiyah: see p. 158, n. 101.

[3] This phrase, the source of which we have been unable to identify, is quoted by Imām Khomeinī in Arabic.

"People are asleep, and when they die they awaken."[1] And when they awaken, they ask themselves what the sense was of their chaotic lives. But it is too late, for "Hellfire surrounds the unbelievers" (Qur'an, 9:49). Even now it surrounds them, but drugged by nature, they are unaware of it and fail to take heed. When the effects of the drug wear off, they see that they are surrounded by flames and are being borne off to hell, whether they like it or not.

Yes, we must wake up while there is still time, and embark on the straight path under the guidance of the prophets. The prophets, without a single expectation, all had as their mission the reformation of man. Both justice and injustice arise from men's deeds, and the purpose of justice, therefore, is to transform the unjust into the just, the *mushrik*[2] into the believer. So the person who, if left to his own devices, would have headed for the deepest pit of hellfire will listen and obey when he is shown the path he must take.

We have not yet set out on this path, not even begun on our migration, despite the seventy or eighty years we have lived. But you young people are better able to refine your souls; you are closer to the spiritual realm than the elderly is, and the roots of corruption within you are still weak and undeveloped. But if you postpone your task of self-reform, those roots will grow stronger and firmer with every passing day. Do not leave it, then, until old age; begin now. Make your lives conform to the teachings of the prophets; that is the starting point. One must follow the path they have indicated—it is they who know where the path lies; we do not. They are physicians and know the path to true health; if you desire health, you must follow their path.

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[1] A tradition varyingly attributed to the Prophet and to Imām 'Alī.

[2] *Mushrik*: one who is guilty of *shirk* (see p. 154, n. 42).

Gradually, you must extricate yourself from the demands of your ego; naturally, this cannot be achieved all at a once. All our worldly hopes and desires will be buried with us, and all this incessant attention to the self will work to our disadvantage. For all that can remain in the Hereafter is what belongs to God: "What is with you will perish, and what is with God will remain" (16:96). Man has what is "with himself" and he also has what is "with God." What is "with himself" is all that comes from his preoccupation with himself, and it will inevitably perish. But whatever he has that relates to God, what is "with God," will remain by virtue of the divine name Eternal (*Bāqī*).

So let us strive to extricate ourselves from the situation in which we find ourselves. Those who fight in *jihād* against the external enemy never fear superior numbers; for the Prophet said that he would never turn back even if all the Arabs united against him. His cause was the cause of God, and the cause of God can never be defeated, nor is there any turning back from it.

Those who engaged in *jihād* in the first age of Islam advanced and pushed forward without any regard for themselves or their personal desires, for they had earlier waged a *jihād* against their selves. Without the inner *jihād*, the outer *jihād* is impossible. *Jihād* is inconceivable unless a person turns his back on his own desires and the world. For what we mean here by "world" is the aggregate of man's aspirations that effectively constitute his world, not the external world of nature with the sun and the moon, which are manifestations of God. It is the world in this narrow, individual sense that prevents man from drawing near to the realm of sanctity and perfection.

May God grant us success in emerging from the pit and following the path of prophets and the *awliyā'*, for it is they who have been "overtaken by death."

Third Session

In order to understand some of the questions I have been discussing, it is necessary to understand the nature of the relation of God to creation. We may understand this relation of a certain degree with the help of a proof, we have learned to recite parrot like (since what lies beyond proof is inaccessible to us). The relation of God to creation is not like that linking one creature to another; for example, father to son to father, where it is a question of two independent beings standing in relation to each other. The relationship of the rays of the sun and the sun itself is of a higher order, but again it concerns two beings linked to each other. Of a higher order still is the relation linking the faculties of the soul to the soul, but this relationship of the auditory, visual, and other faculties and the soul is still marked by a certain separation and multiplicity. The relation that links all beings to their principle, God Almighty, cannot be regarded as similar to any of the foregoing.

There are expressions in both the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* indicating the true nature of this relationship. For example, "His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain" (7:143), or this phrase

from the Prayer of *Simat*:[1] "By the light of Your face, which You manifested to the mountain, causing it to crumble." Both expressions indicate that the nature of God's relation to creation is one of manifestation. The same thing is indicated by the verse: "God takes souls at the time of their death" (39:42), for it means that God takes the life even of the person who is apparently killed by another, and by the verse: "When you cast the dust you did not cast it; rather cast it" (8:17), which states the matter explicitly. God's relation to His creation, then, is one of manifestation and lightly. If we understand this, even based on proof repeated parrot-fashion, it will assist us understanding many matters in these noble verses.

According to the first possibility we suggested, "praise" (*al-ḥamd*) means the sum total of instances of praise and is infinitely multiple, and the sense of "name" in the expression "In the Name of God" is correspondingly multiple. Whatever praise is uttered cannot but revert to God Almighty, for it is the manifestations that are being praised, and they are God's. The manifestation of God is of a higher order than that of the sun through its rays, or that of the soul through its auditory and visual faculties. Praise belongs to the manifestations, and the corresponding multiple names belong to Him.

The second possibility we advanced was that "praise" means absolute praise and, contrary to the first possibility, no praise uttered a praiser can relate to God. It relates only to His manifestations, and cannot be absolute. However, insofar as all forms of multiplicity are effaced in that absolute being, again it can be said that any praise that is uttered pertains to Him. The difference here is between the vantage point of multiplicity and

[1] A prayer attributed to the fifth and sixth Imāms. Its recitation is particulary recommended during the last hours of Friday. For the text of the prayer, see Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān* (Tehran, n.d.), pp. 95-100.

that of unity. According to the former, no praise uttered can pertain to the absolute being, and according to the latter, all instance of praside pertain to Him, given that multiplicity is effaced in unity.

The two interpretations of the verse differ completely. If praise is generic, meaning the sum total of instances of praise, then "name" in the expression "In the Name of God" also means in effect, "the sum total of multiple names," so that every being is a name. But if we hold to the other interpretation of "praise," then the sense of "name" also changes. Each name will differ and be marked by multiplicity. The name Allah becomes a manifestation of God Almighty in multiplicity and differentiation.

According to the first possibility, the Supreme Name is a manifestation of God's Essence in beings, and the names Compassionate and Merciful are a manifestation of the acts of His Essence. The same is true of the name Lord of the Worlds. But according to the second possibility, which regards "praise" as meaning absolute and unrestricted praise, praise belongs only to the name Allah, while the names Compassionate, Merciful, and Lord of the Worlds are subsumed within the Essence for which the Supreme Name stands, instead of being manifestations of that Essence.

All of the foregoing depends on inductive reasoning, as employed in the higher forms of philosophy. It is, however, very different from what the *awliyā'* experienced and came to witness directly after traversing the stages of spiritual wayfaring.

The *awliyā'* cannot convey their witnessing to men. It was also necessary that the Qur'an descend, come down to a level where it would be able to address humanity, trapped in its fetters and the pit of misguidance. The tongue of the Prophet was tied; he could not convey reality to men except by descending to their level of perception. The Qur'an has seven of seventy levels of

meaning,[1] and the lowest of those levels is the one where it addresses us. For example, God Almighty makes Himself known to us by in invoking the camel: "Do they not look upon the she-camel, to see how it was created?" (77:17). The sun, the heavens, the earth, and man himself are similarly invoked.

This inability of men to comprehend was a source of sorrow to the prophets. Their tongues were all tied, and Moses (upon whom be peace) prayed to God: "O Lord expand my breast for me, make my task easy and loosen the knot on my tongue" (20:25). There were knots confining the prophets' tongues or their hearts in the sense that they were unable to convey to men the realities they had experienced and the way in which they had experienced them. The realities were ineffable, but the prophets tried to convey something of them to us by means of parables and symbols.

If God makes Himself known to us by invoking the camel, it is obvious that we exist on a very low level in fact on the same level as the animal itself, and that the knowledge we are capable of attaining is extremely deficient.

Let us examine the Qur'anic narrative concerning Moses. "When his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it as dust and Moses fell down in a swoon" (7:143). That is, Moses was overwhelmed by his Lord, and passed beyond the levels of perception to which we are limited. But then he said: "Show me, that I may look upon You." (7:143). Moses, a great prophet, asked to see God with his own eyes; that is, he asked for a mode of vision, involving seer and seen, that is unattainable for us with respect to God. Although he had advanced to the point of receiving direct address from God, he said: "My Lord, show me

[1] Cf. this tradition of the Prophet: "The Qur'an has been revealed on seven levels (*ahruf*), each having an outer and an inner meaning, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib has knowledge of both."

that I may look upon You." The answer came: "You shall not see Me" (7:143). The probable meaning of this response is: "As long as you are Moses, as long as you are you, you shall not see Me." But God did not leave Moses without any hope, and told him to look instead at the mountain. What was the mountain? Was the mountain that received the divine manifestation denied to Moses Mount Sināī? If there had been people on the mountain that day, would have seen the manifestation, perhaps in the form of bright sunlight? "Look upon the mountain, and when the mountain subsides you shall see Me." (7:143). What is meant by the mountain subsiding is probably its dissolving into dust as a result of the divine manifestation. As for the mountain itself, it is probably a symbol for the egoism of the human soul, traces of which still persisted in Moses. When God reduced the mountain to dust by His manifestation, all egoism perished and Moses attained the station of death: "Moses fell in a swoon."

All this is a story for us; what others have witnessed and experienced directly is conveyed to us in the form of a story, the story of Mount Sināī, because we are still imprisoned in the darkness. The manifestation itself appears to have been in the form of light seen by Moses on Mount Sināī, and insofar as it was capable of being perceived by the senses, others too would have see it. Like-wise, when Jibra'īl, the Trusted Spirit, recited the Qur'an to the Most Noble Messenger, those present also heard it. But the seeing and hearing were as it from afar.[1]

The prophets are like men who have seen a dream that they cannot describe; their tongues are tied, and those around them are deaf. They are unable to speak and we are unable to hear; rather they do speak, but not for us. We understand only those things that are comprehensible to us. The Qur'an in everything:

[1] See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1370/1951), I, 39 ff.

it contains exoteric material, legal injunctions, as well as narratives whose inner sense we cannot understand; we understand and benefit from their outer aspects only. Full benefit can be drawn from the Qur'an only by the man to whom it was addressed—the Messenger of God.[1] All others are deprived of such complete benefit unless they attain it by means of instruction from him, as was the case with the *awliyā'*.

The Qur'an indicates that it descended to the Prophet: "The Trusted Spirit descended with it to your heart" (26:193). The Qur'an underwent a descent to the Prophet by means of the Trusted Spirit so that it might be received by him at his station. In the same connection, God says: "We sent it [the Qur'an] down on the Night of Power" (97:1); that is, "We sent it down in its entirety to the Prophet on the Night of Power, in the form of a manifestation." First, the Qur'an was in the keeping of the Trusted Spirit, and then it underwent a descent in order to enter the heart of the Prophet.

The Qur'an descended, then, from level to level, from degree to degree, until finally it assumed a verbal form. The Qur'an is not verbal in substance; it does not pertain to the audiovisual realm; it does not belong to the category of accidents. It was, however, "brought down" so that we, the dumb and the blind, might benefit from it to the extent of our ability. But as for those who can benefit more fully, their understanding of the Qur'an is different, and their orientation to the principle from which the Qur'an has descended is different. When the manifestation of God Almighty emerges from the unseen and descends to the world of nature or bodies, there is a vast distance separating this lowest degree from the infinite realms of the unseen, and beyond

[1] The Prophet was not only the transmitter of the Qur'an to mankind at large but also its primary recipient: certain aspects of its meaning were reserved for him alone

them, the first appearance of that manifestation. There is a correspondingly vast distance separating our perception from that of those superior to us, at the pinnacle of whom stand the *awliyā'* and the prophets of God.

Moses, then, witnessed a divine manifestation when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain. The Prayer of *Simat*[1] also makes reference to this manifestation in the phrase "by the light of your face which You manifested to the mountain." A different form of manifestation is referred to in the verse: "O Moses, I, verily I am God" (28:30); here the tree is the vehicle for the manifestation. All these statements referring to manifestation are true, and represent different aspects of manifestation. But if we wish to learn the Qur'an, what are we to do? Matters like these can neither be taught nor learned in their deepest sense.

When we wish to study the Qur'an and its interpretation, we have recourse to the commentaries currently in use that contain indications likely to be of use to deaf and blind persons like ourselves. The Qur'an contains everything, but only he who was addressed by it fully understands it. The high degree of that person indicated in the verses: "The Trusted Spirit descended with it [the Qur'an] to your heart," and "We sent it [the Qur'an] down on the Night of Power." The visionary experience indicated in these verses cannot be shared by anyone else. It is not a question open to rational proof or demonstration, but a question of immediate perception of the unseen; no one else can attain it by any means, whether by unveiling[2] or by vision of the soul, the intellect, or the heart. It was only the heart of the world—the heart of the Prophet—that was vouchsafed that perception, as "he who was addressed by the Qur'an.

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[1] See no. 46 above.

[2] Unveiling: *kashf*, immediate awareness of those unseen matters that lie beyond the dark and light veils of God's creation.

He is unable to convey what he has perceived except by clothing in words and symbols. How can you make the blind understand what the light of the sun is? What language, what words can you use? Light is something that dispels darkness; how can you make one who has never seen light understand what it is? There is, then, a knot tying the tongues of the prophets, and there are knots tying the ears of those who hear them.

The difficulties of the Most Noble Messenger were greater than those of the other prophets in this respect. To whom could he convey those dimensions of the Qur'an that had descended upon his heart, except the one whom he had appointed to be his successor in every respect?[1] He is reputed to have said: "No other prophet was vexed as I have been." If this tradition is authentic, it may be that part of its meaning relates to the Prophet's inability to convey fully what he had experienced, or to find anyone to convey it to. It grieved him that although what he had experienced was greater than what all the earlier prophets had experienced; he was unable to convey it to everybody as he wished to. Imagine the sorrow of a father who wishes to make his blind son understand what the sun is; what could he possibly say that would convey to him the meaning of light? All he has available to him are verbal formulae that may even serve as a barrier to understanding.

It has been said that "Knowledges is the thickest of veil," for pursuit of knowledge causes man to be preoccupied with rational and general concepts and hinders him from embarking on the path. The more knowledge increases, the thicker the evil

[1] I.e., 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The phrase "in every respect" obviously does not mean that he succeeded to the prophetic function of the Messenger, but rather that he inherited full political authority as well as a unique competence to understand and interpret the Qur'an. See no. 47 above.

becomes, and the scholar may come to imagine that the knowledge he has achieved rationally represents everything. For man is arrogant as long as his skin contains him, and any branch of learning he has studied and mastered he regards as the sum total of perfection. The *faqīh* imagines that there is nothing but fiqh; the mystic, that there is nothing but mysticism; the philosopher, that there is nothing but philosophy; and the engineer, that there is nothing but engineering. In each case, they imagine that science consists exclusively of what they have learned, observed, and experienced, and that nothing else should be regarded as knowledge.

Knowledge, once seen in this way, becomes the thickest of all veils, until what was meant to be a guide on the path serves sa a hindrance. The knowledge that was intended to guide man now denies him guidance. That is the case with all formal learning: it may veil man from what he should be. Whenever learning enters an unpurified heart, it induces egoism in it and holds back, and the greater the weight of accumulated knowledge, the greater its harmful effects. Seed that is sown in brackish, stony ground will never yield fruit. When veils keep a heart from the perception of truth, a heart that has not been purified, that does not fear the name of God, it will shrink back from contemplating philosophical matters as if they were a snake, even though philosophy is merely a branch of formal learning. The philosopher, in turn, will shrink back from mysticism, and even the mystic will shrink back from what lies beyond him. For all branches of formal learning consist of transmitted verbal formulae.

At the very least, therefore, we ought to strive to purify ourselves so that formal learning does not completely bar our access to God or prevent us from remembering Him. This, too, is an important concern: our lack of knowledge should not cause us to be heedless of God, or induce such arrogance in us that we fall away from the source of all perfection. This arrogance is to be

seen in all learned people, whether concerned with the physical and natural sciences, the sciences of the *Sharī'ah*, or the rational sciences. If the heart is not purified, learning brings arrogance, and it is precisely arrogance that hinders man from setting out toward God. When the scholar studies, he is completely absorbed in his study, but when he prays, he is not present in his prayer. A friend of mine (may God have mercy upon him) used to say: "I have forgotten; let me pray so may be I can remember."[1] When such men pray, it is as if they were completely absent from the prayer: they do not direct their attention to God and their hearts are elsewhere. They might be attempting to solve some academic problem, so that what was meant to be an aid attaining the goal now holds them back.

There are the sciences of the *Sharī'ah*, of Qur'anic interpretation, of *tawḥīd*,[2] but, placed in an unprepared and unpurified heart, they become like fetters and chains tying one down. The sciences and concerns of the *Sharī'ah* are all a means, means for proper action, and action, in turn, is a means for attaining the ultimate goal, which is the awakening of the soul and its emergence from the dark veils that envelop it. Even then, the soul will find itself facing veils of light, for: "God has seventy thousand veils of light and of darkness." Veils of light are no less veils for being composed of light, but we have not even emerged from the veils of darkness; we are thoroughly entangled in veils. What is to become of us? Learning has had entirely negative effects on our souls. All the sciences of the *Sharī'ah* as well as the rational sciences (which are also called the "abstract" sciences; i.e. sciences that have no objective

[1] That is, the mind of this man would wander so uncontrollably during prayer that he might accidentally remember something he had forgotthen.

[2] The science of *tawḥīd*: that discipline of theology which seeks to establish the divine unity and related doctrines by means of rational argument.

existence) are intended as means for attaining the goal, but instead, each of them has come to serve as a hindrance. It is no longer a question of learning, but of a dark veil, an obstacle in the path of man preventing him from attaining that goal for the sake of which all the prophets came: to lead man forth from this world, out of the darkness, and to convey him to the realm of absolute light. The prophets wanted to immerse man in that absolute light, to merge the drop with the ocean (this image, of course, is not exact).

It is for this purpose that all the prophets were sent. All true knowledge and objective reality belong exclusively to that light; we are all non-beings, and our origin is that light. All the prophets were sent to deliver us from the darkness and convey us to the absolute light, freeing us from both the veils of darkness and those of light. The science of *tawḥīd* may itself turn into a veil. It establishes proofs for the existence of God Almighty, but simultaneously veils man from God and prevents him from becoming what he should be. The prophets and the *awliyā'* did not depend on proofs; they knew the proofs but never cared to use them to establish the existence of God. The Lord of the Martyrs said, addressing God Almighty: "When were You ever absent? It is blind eyes that have failed to see Your presence.

The point of departure is "arising" (*qiyām*), as is enjoined in this Qur'anic verse: "I admonish you to do one thing: to arise for God" (34:46). Those who have analyzed spiritual wayfaring, for example, Shaykh 'Abdullāh Anṣārī in this *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*,[1]

[1] Shaykh 'Abdullāh Anṣārī: a prolific *Ṣūfī* author, 396/1006-481/1089. A scholar of great literary skill and spiritual insight, he wrote in both Persian and Arabic. For the relevant passage in his *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* ("The Stage of the Wayfarers"), see pp. 16-17 of the edition published in Cairo in 1954 by S. de Laugier de Beaurecueil, together with the *Sharḥ* ("commentary") of 'Abd al-Mu'tī al-Iskandarī. The commentary defines "arising" as: "awakning from the slumber of neglect and emerging from the pit of apathy.

have regarded this "arising" as the first stage on the path. (It may not be a stage at all, however, but rather a preliminary, followed by the stages.) First there is an admonition, an injunction, coming from someone who has attained the goal himself and is instructed by God to summon men to arise. It all starts with this "arising for God." Man begins to move for the sake of God, to remain still for the sake of God—to awaken from his sleep. In this verse, it is as if an order is being given to tell the sleeping and heedless to arise for God's sake and to embark on God's path. We have not heeded this simple injunction and have therefore been unable to set out on that path. We prefer instead to follow our own paths; that is true even of the best of us.

This admonition is directed to us, not to the *awliyā'*; they are a different breed of men and have already attained the goal. We too will be taken in that direction; no one can say that we are here to stay. The angels empowered over all our faculties are taking us in that direction, and have been doing so ever since we entered the natural realm. But we will go burdened by darkness and veils.

Love of the self is the source and origin of all sins and errors, together with love of the world. This love may sometimes cause a man, even though he is a worshipper of the One God, to leave the world with resentment and hatred in his heart if he believes that God has taken something from him. It is said that when a man is about to depart from this world, the demons that do not want him to leave it a believer will display to him all the things he loves. A student of the religious sciences, for example, might be attached to a book. They will bring the book to him and say, "Unless you renounce your belief, we will burn this book." They will threaten others in a similar way with their children or whatever they may be particularly attached to.

Do not imagine that it is necessarily the wealthy who are regarded as worldly. It is possible, for example, that someone

might own vast estates but not be wordly,[1] while a student might possess only a book and yet be quite wordly. The criterion is attachment, the ties that bind man to things. These ties may make man an enemy of God when he sees them being severed at the end of his life, so that he then leaves the world in a state of enmity toward God. So, curtail your attachments; we will leave this world whether or not we are bound in affection to something. Maybe you are attached to a book you own and maybe you are not, but in either case the book is yours and what is important is that you make use of it. Likewise, may be you are attached to the house you live in and maybe you are not, but again, the house is yours, and what is important is that you make use of it. So curtail your attachments, or even eliminate them if possible. What afflicts man is his attachments, and they, in turn, arise out of his love of self. Love of the world, love of leadership, love of authority, love for a particular mosque, all these are forms of attachment to the world, a series of veils that envelop us. Let us not sit and discuss the state of others, but let us pay attention to our own situation. Let us see how strong our attachments are to our possessions, and whether what we find objectionable in others also exists in us.

Were it not for this self-love and arrogance, man would never find fault with others. When some of us do so, it is because in our love of self, we see ourselves as perfect and purified and others as full of defects and salts. You know of that poem—I do not wish to recite it—in which someone condemns a certain woman and she replies: "I am indeed all that you say, but are you truly all that you seem?"[2] We pretend to society that we have

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[1] This statement is not intended to sanction "vast estates," but merely to emphasize that the essence of worldlinees is attachment to possessions, not the mere owning of them.

[2] An allusion to one of the celebrated quatrains of 'Umar Khayyām (412/1021-515/112):

1. A shaykh once said to a whore: "You're drunk.

come to the madrasa to study the *Sharī'ah* for the God, and that we are part of God's army. But are we really what our outward appearances proclaim us to be? All too often, our inner reality does not conform to our outer appearance but instead contradicts it.

What is this if not hypocrisy? It is not hypocrisy to proclaim one's religiosity without being religious, as Abū Sufyān[1] did? It is also hypocrisy to pretend to possess qualities without in fact doing so. All of these are different forms of hypocrisy.

We must forgo this world, then, and avoid the attachment to it that arises from love of self. But let it not be said that the prophets have summoned us only to the Hereafter, not to this world. For while they did indeed summon men to an awareness of the Hereafter they also established justice in this world. The Most Noble Messenger was a being close to God, but because of his perpetual involvement in this world, he is reported to have said: "My heart is clouded, and I seek pardon of God seventy times a day."[2] Interacting with men at a lower level than himself clouded his heart, for he was meant to be constantly in the presence of his Beloved. Even if the person who came to him was a truly good man prompted by the desire to ask a question, still he prevented the Prophet from remaining uninterruptedly at the level where he wished to be. Naturally, the Prophet submitted to the necessity of such interaction with men and regarded those who came to speak to him as manifestations of God. Nonetheless, he was prevented from remaining constantly in the

2. And held each night in a different embrace!"
3. Said she: "O Shaykh. I am indeed all that you say.
4. But are you thruly all that you seem?"

[1] Abū Sufyān: see no. 41 above.

[2] A similar interpretation of this "clouding" of the Prophet's heart is to be found in the celebrated seventh- thirteenth—century *Sūfī* compendium *Mirsād al-'Ibād*, by Najm al-Dīn Radī (p. 326 of the Tehran edition of 1352 Sh./1973).

presence of his Beloved, and thus he said: "My heart is clouded, and I seek pardon of God seventy times a day."

Preoccupation with the faults of other is a veil that we must remove. Let us at least strive to be what we appear to be, not something else. If there are marks of constant prostration on our foreheads suggesting that we are laboring for God's sake, let us shun all hypocrisy in our prayer. If we present ourselves as very saintly, let us not accept interest or deceive people, and so on.

The idea that the spiritual sciences discourage people from activity is untrue. The man who taught these sciences to the people and who was more versed in their truths than anyone, after the Messenger of God, took up his pickaxe and went about his work immediately after receiving the allegiance of the people.[1] There is no contradiction between spirituality and activity. Those who would dissuade people from engaging in supplicatory prayer and *dhikr*[2] on the pretext of involving them more fully in the world do not understand how matters lie. They do not know that it is precisely prayer and the like that make man become a true human being so that he may conduct himself toward the world as he ought. It was, after all, the prophets who established justice in this world, while they were engaged in meditation and *dhikr*.

The same was true of those who rose up a aainst tyrants; look, for example, at the prayer made on the Day of *'Arafah*[3] by

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[1] i.e. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

[2] *Dhikr*: inducing or maintaining a state of awareness of God, especially by means of the vocal or silent recitation of His Supreme Name.

[3] Day of *'Arafah*: the ninth of the month of Dhu'l-Ḥijjah, when all the pilgrims participating in the *ḥajj* must be present at the plain of *'Arafah* outside Mecca. For the text of the prayer that Imām Ḥusayn recited on this day, see Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān*, pp. 350-369, and for a translation of it, see William C. Chittick, A Sh'ite Anthology (Albany, N.Y., 1980). Pp. 93-113.

Husayn ibn 'Alī (upon whom be peace). Prayer and *dhikr* are the beginning of all things, for if man practices them correctly, they cause him to turn toward the origin of his being in the unseen and to strengthen his attachment to it. Not only does this not deter him from activity, it even produces in him the best of activity, for he comes to understand that his activity should not be for his own sake but for the sake of God's bondsmen, and that his activity should be service to God.

Those who criticize the books of prayer do so out of ignorance. The poor people do not know the way these books make true human being of men. The prayers that have been handed down from the Imāms, like the Invocations of Sha'bān,[1] the Prayer of Kumayl,[2] or the Prayer of the Lord of the Martyrs (upon whom be peace) on the Day of *'Arafah*, all contribute to the making of true human beings. The person who recited the Invocations of Sha'bān was also the same one who drew his sword to go into battle against the unbelievers. Indeed, according to tradition, all the Imāms recited the Invocations of Sha'bān, something that is not recorded concerning any other prayer. These prayers lead man out of the darkness, and once he has emerged, he wields his sword for God's sake, fights for God's sake, and rises up for God's sake. These prayers do not deter from labor and activity, as those people imagine for whom the world consist exclusively of personal desires, while everything else becomes "abstract." Eventually they will come to realize that what they thought was abstract is objective and real, and vice versa. Books of elevating sermons and prayer—*Nahj al-*

[1] Invocations of Sha'bān: see p. 349. The Prayer of Kumayl: a prayer taught to Kumayl ibn Ziyād, a close associate of Imām 'Alī, by the Imām. Its recitation is particularly recommended during the early hours of Friday. For the text, see Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, *Mafātīh al-Jinān*, pp. 83-90.

[2] See introductory note by Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī. *Mafātih al-Jinān*, p. 213.

Balāghah,[1] *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān*,[2] and the like—all prefer support for man in his efforts to become a true human being.

Once a man has become a true human being, he will be the most active of men. He will until the land, but until it for God's sake. He will also wage war, for all the wars waged against unbelievers and oppressors were waged by men absorbed in the divine unity and engaged in the constant recitation of prayer. Most of those who fought with the Most Noble Messenger (upon whom be peace and blessings) or with the Commander of the Faithful (upon whom be peace) were men devoted to countless acts of worship.

The Commander of the Faithful not only stood in prayer at the beginning of a battle; he would also continue his prayer in its midst. Once someone asked him a question concerning the divine unity just as a battle was about to begin, and he proceeded to answer it. When another person objected, "I now the time for such things?" he replied, "This is the reason that we are fighting Mu'āwiyah, not for any wordly again. It is not our true aim to capture Syria; of what value is Syria?" It was not the aim of the Prophet or the Commander of the Faithful to capture Syria and Iraq, but rather to make men into true human beings, and to free them from the clutches of oppressors. This they did because they were reciters of prayer, not in spite of that fact. Lock at the Prayer of Kumayl, which has been transmitted from the

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[1] *Nahj al-Balāghah*: a collection of sermons, addresses and epistles attributed to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. It was compiled by Sayyid Sharīf Raḍī in the fourth/tenth century.

[2] *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān*: the standard manual of Shi'i devotion, containing the supplicatory prayers of the Imāms, as well as formulae for recitation at particular times or during visitation of the tombs of the Imāms. Its compiler, Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, was a scholar of vas learning who died in Najaf in 1359/1940.

Commander of the Faithful, and reflect on the fact that it was composed by a man who wielded the sword.

At one time, it was the practice to burn the books of prayer in order to deprive people of them. That vile person Kasrawī[1] set aside a day on which books relating to mysticism or supplicatory prayer would be brought in for burning. They fail to understand what effect supplicatory prayer has on the souls of men; they do not realize that it is the reciters of prayer who perform all virtuous and blesses deeds. Those who recite prayers and engage in *dhikr*, even in a weak and parrotlike manner, will benefit to a certain degree, and to that degree they will be better off than those who abandon prayer and invocation. Similarly, the person who performs his daily prayers, even at a low level of awareness, is better than the person who does not; he will purer of soul, and at least will not engage in theft, for example. Look at the statistics on crime and see how few crimes have been committed by students of the religious sciences in comparison with other people. See how few mullahs are guilty of theft, drunkenness, or other offenses. Of course there are some persons, who have infiltrated the religious institutions, but they are not given to prayer or other forms of worship; they have merely assumed the guise of the *mullā* for the sake of wordly benefit. As for those who are given to reciting prayers and fulfilling the outward duties of Islam, they have either no criminal records or relatively few. They are a support for the order of the world.

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[1] Kasrawī: more fully, Aḥmad Kasrawī, an Iranian historian, 1306/1888-1364/1945. In a series of controcersial worls, he attacked both *Sūfī*sm and Shi'i Islam as sources of superstition and national retardation (see his *Sūfigarī* and *Shī'agarī*). He also attempted to propagate a "pure Persian" language, replacing all Arabic loanwords with coinages of his own, and a pseudo-religion he called *Pāk-Dīn* (the pure religion). He was assassinated in 1945 by Nawwāb Ṣafawī, founder of the *Fidā'iyān-e Islām*, an organization dedicated to the installation of an Islamic polity in Iran. See also p. 425.

We must not, then, dismiss supplicatory prayer or dissuade our young from engaging in it. There are people who would do so on the pretext of bringing the Qur'an into greater prominence, but supplicatory prayer is a path understanding the Qur'an, a path we must not lose. The notion that the Qur'an alone should be recited, to the total exclusion of supplicatory prayer and *ḥadīth*, is an insinuation of the devil. Once we exclude supplicatory prayer and *ḥadīth*, we will lose the Qur'an itself. Those who wish to set aside *ḥadīth* in order to promote the Qur'an are incapable of promoting it, and likewise, those who say, "We do not want supplicatory prayer, only the Qur'an" are incapable of acting in accordance with the Qur'an.

All these notions are insinuation of the devil designed to mislead our young. But our young must ask themselves which group has served society better—those who cultivate the *ḥadīth* and engage in supplicatory prayer and *dhikr*, or those who have abandoned them all, claiming to be devoted exclusively to the Qur'an. It is the believers, those who supplicate and remember God and perform their prayers regularly that have performed virtuous and charitable acts and established institutions to aid the weak. Those who could afford it have also established *madrasah* and hospitals.

These forms of devotional practice, then, must not be banished from our people. On the contrary, let us encourage the people to turn increasingly to God through them. Quite apart from the fact that helps man in his movement toward absolute perfection, they are of benefit to society. For the person who devotes himself to prayer will not disturb lawful public order, nor will he engage in thievery, and prevention of theft is more beneficial to society than apprehension of thief once a theft has already been committed. Suppose that half the members of society engage in supplicatory prayer, *dhikr*, and so forth; this means that half of society will be abstaining from sin. The merchant, for example, will not be stealing from his customers.

But those who take their guns to go lie in wait on mountain passes and shoot people are strangers to prayer and invocation.

Society is trained and educated, then, by means of these supplicatory prayers, as God and the Most Noble Messenger have indicated: "Say: Were it not for your supplicatory prayer, your Lord would not pay you heed' " (25:77). Those who claim to be devoted to the Qur'an should realize that the Qur'an itself exalts supplicatory prayer and exhorts men to engage in it. God tells them that if it were not for their calling upon Him, He would not pay any attention to them. Those who claim to reject supplicatory prayer on the authority of the Qur'an are rejecting the Qur'an for the Qur'an says: "Call upon me in prayer, that I may answer you" (40:60).

May God make us devotees of supplicatory prayer, devotees of *shirk*, and devotees of the Qur'an, if He so wills.

Fourth Session

Another matter that emerges from what we said on previous occasions is that the "*bā*" in *bismillāh* ("In the Name of God") is not a causative "*bā*", as the grammarians would put it. There can be no question cause and effect with respect to God's action. God's action is best described in terms of manifestation, for that is the term the Qur'an itself uses in the verse: "His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain" (7:143), and implies in the verse: "He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward" (57:3). Manifestation implies a relationship of a different mode than that of cause and effect, which would presuppose an inclination on the part of the Divine Essence toward creation.

Therefore, we must either interpret causality broadly enough to accommodate manifestation, or say flatly that the "*bā*" in *bismillāh* is not a causative "*bā*". *Bismillāh* has the sense of "by means of the name of God," by means of His manifestation," and in conjunction with *al-ḥamdulillāh*, it means: "Praise belongs to God by means of His name." It is a cause of which praise is the effect (to the best of my recollection, the expression "cause and effect" does not occur anywhere in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*).

Rather, it is an expression used by the philosophers. The terms we encounter in the Qur'an are "manifestation" and "creation."

Another point to be mentioned, and one that is the subject of a certain tradition, is the dot under the ba of *bismillāh*. It is referred to in a particular tradition attributed to the Commander of the Faithful (upon whom be peace). The authenticity of the tradition is uncertain, and there are some indications, that it has been falsely ascribed to him. In any event, he is reputed to have said: "I am the dot under the ba."[1] If the tradition is authentic, we can take the dot to mean "absolute manifestation," the first individuation, which consists of vilayat in its essential meaning; i.e., universal vilayat.[2] The first individuation or absolute manifestation, in turn, may be understood as the highest degree of being, corresponding to universal vilayat.

There are also a number of question connected with the sense of the word "name." One is that the name sometimes stands for the Divine Essence; it is comprehensive or Supreme Name, of which the names Compassionate and Merciful are the manifestations. Allah is the supreme name, the first manifestation standing for the Essence, and the other names represent nominal manifestation. The Essence also has other manifestations, notably active manifestations, which are said to

[1] The sense of this tradition (which may not be authentic) is connected to another tradition, which states: "All that is in the revealed books is in the Qur'an; all that is in the Qur'an is in *Sūrah al-Fātihah*; all that is in *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is in *bismillāh*; all that is in *bismillāh* is in the letter ba; all that is in the letter ba is in the dot beneath it." See Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī. *Rūḥ al-Bayān* (Istanbul, 1389/1969), I, 10. Correlating the two traditions, we conclude that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was a compressed manifestation in human form of the triths of revelation.

[2] Concerning universal *wilāyah*, see p. 155, no. 63.

relate either to the oneness (vahidiyat)[1] or the will. These terms should be noted.

Many divine names are mentioned in the last three verses of *sūrah al-Ḥashr*: "He is God, other than Whom there is no god, the knower of the manifest and the unseen; He is the Compassionate, the Merciful; He is God, other than whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Sanctified, Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Mighty, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glorified be God above the partners that they attribute to Him! He is God, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms" (59:22-24).

We see three possible categories of names mentioned in each of these verses. In the first, the name Allah stands for the Essence, and the names that follow it are apposite to the Essence. In the second, the name Allah stands for the manifestation of the Essence by means of the attributes, and the names that follow it correspond to that. While in the third, Allah stands for the actives manifestation of the Essence, and the names following it are again correspondent. To put it differently, there are three forms of manifestation: the manifestation of the Essence to the Essence, the manifestation through the names, and the manifestation through the acts.

"He is the First and the Last": this may mean that the existence of all that lies between first and last is negated; there is only He. Again, "He is the Outward and the Inward": that is, whatever is manifest is He, not from Him. There are different degrees of manifestation, but the manifestations are not separate from the Manifestor. This is difficult to conceive, but once a person has grasped it, it is easy for him to saaent to it.

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[1] *Wāḥidiyyat*: oneness as it pertains to the divine attributes; the unity that pervades the multiplicity of the divine attributes and assures the coherence of their manifestation in creation.

Allah may also be a name indicating the manifestation of the Essence through the attributes; and if that is the case, it is a comprehensive (*jāmi'*) manifestation. This does not contradict the first two possibilities; it compatible with both of them, although they are mutually incompatible. The compatibility is due to the absence of separation between the degrees of manifestation.

We are, of course, passing over these matters very rapidly without discussing them fully, but there is a further matter to which I must draw attention. Sometimes we attempt to gauge reality in accordance with sensory perception; at other times, we view in accordance with reason; and at still other times, we contemplate it with our heart. Beyond the vision of the heart, there is also the possibility of witnessing.[1] Generally, however, we rely on rational perception and the weighing of proof, and even according to this usual method, we can recognize that all reality can be reduced to the Sacred Essence and the manifestations.

There are three categories of manifestation then—the manifestation of the Essence to the Essence, the manifestation through the attributes, and the manifestation through the acts—that may be indicated in the verses cited above. They also yield the meaning that in the face of God Almighty, nothing exists; in the face of absolute being, nothing can exist.

If we understand this through rational perception, we can examine ourselves and see whether we have conveyed it to our hearts, where it can be converted into faith; whether we have assimilated it by means of spiritual wayfaring, for it to be

[1] Witnessing: *shuhūd*, the witnessing of God that excluded any awareness of self and that takes place through the agency of God Himself, not by means of any organ of vision, wheter outer or inner.

converted into gnosis; and whether we have attained states even beyond that.

Regardless of the mode and degree of our perception, reality remains what it is. And the reality is this: there is nothing other than God Almighty; whatever is, is He. The manifestation is not only His; it is also He. There is no exact image that can be evoked in this respect; the object that casts a shadow together with the shadow itself is imprecise and defective. A preferable image would be the ocean and its waves. The wave has no separate existence with respect to the ocean; it is the ocean, although one cannot say the converse, that the ocean is its waves. Waves come into existence only through the motion of the ocean. When we consider the matter rationally, it appears to us that both the ocean and the waves exist, the latter being an accident with respect to the former. But the truth of the matter is that there is nothing but ocean; the wave is also the ocean. This world is also like a wave with respect to God.

This image, too, is inevitably defective, of course. When we attempt to understand these matters in accordance with our limited perception, we are bound to have recourse se to general images that enable us to grasp the concepts involved. The next stage is to establish the truth of those concepts by means of rational proof. And if we wish to establish the truth of the statement that there exists only the Essence and Its manifestations, that there is only pure and absolute being, being without qualification, we say that if being is subject to any or defect, it is not absolute being; absolute being is that in which there is neither defect nor individuation. And since there is neither defect nor individuation in absolute being, it must be the entirety of being, not lacking in any respect. All of his attributes are absolute, not individuated: compassion, mercy, divinity—all these are absolute.

Once light or being is absolute and undifferentiated, it must include all perfections within itself, since the loss of a single

perfection entails individuation. If there is even a single point of deficiency in the Divine Essence, it will mean that a point of being is absent; being will no longer be absolute, and becoming deficient, it will also become contingent and no longer necessary, for necessary being is absolute perfection and beauty. Therefore, when we regard the matter using the imperfect method of rational proof, we conclude that Allah is the name for the Essence of absolute being, which is the source of all manifestation. It contains all the names and all the attributes and is absolute perfection, perfection without individuation. This perfection cannot lack anything, for if it did, it would no longer be absolute but contingent, however high the degree of relative perfection that it might still enjoy. It is said that "Pure being is all things, but is not a single thing among them." That is, it is all things, not by means of individuation, but in absolute perfection.

In addition, since the names are not separate from the Essence, all that allpies to the name Allah must also apply to the name Compassionate. Once Compassionate becomes absolute perfection, absolute mercy must also possess all the perfection of being, for otherwise it would not be absolute.

"Call upon Allah or call upon the Compassionate; however you call upon Him, His are the Most Beautiful Names" (17:110). All the Most Beautiful Names are present in all attributes of God Almighty in absolute fashion. This being the case, there can be no question of boundaries between the name and the thing named, or between one name and another name. The Most Beautiful Names are not like the names that we apply to things, each in accordance with different perceptions that we have. For example, we speak of light and manifestation, but light and manifestation are not two separate of the same reality: manifestation is identical to light, and light to manifestation. Absolute being, then, is absolute perfection, and absolute perfection means the possession of all attributes in absolute

fashion, in such a way that no separation among them is conceivable.

The foregoing represents a process of rational argument. A certain mystic is reputed to have said, "Wherever I go, I find this blind man with his stick." By the blind man he meant Avicenna and the sentence as a whole means that whatever he[1] attained by means of visionary experience, Avicenna attained by means of rational argument. He was blind, but had a stick—that is, rational argument—and supporting himself on that stick, he advanced to the same place that the mystic had reached through witnessing.

The mystic rightly described us who depend on rational argument as blind, for even after expounding the divine unity, absolute unity, and establishing by means of argument that the principle of being is absolute perfection, we are still dependent on our rational proofs and sit outside the wall of proof we have erected without being able to see. We may, of course, convey the result of our arguments to the heart by means of strenuous effort, so that the heart, in turn, comes to perceive that "Pure being is all things." The heart is like an infant that must be fed slowly and carefully, with small morsels. One who has reached a rational perception of the truth by means of proof and argument must gradually inculcate it to the heart, spelling it, as it were, letter by letter and constantly repeating it.

Once the heart has perceived that pure being is the sum total of all perfection, it will have attained faith. When the fruit of rational perception is conveyed to the heart through constant effort and repetition, the heart begins to read the Qur'an itself

[1] This sentence is quoted by Imām Khomeinī in Arabic. We have not been able to identify its origin.

and to learn the truths contained in it. It will come to believe that "There is no one in the house but the owner of the house."[1]

This still represents the degree of faith, and even the degree of "tranquility of the heart"[2] is inferior to what the prophets attained. Witnessing is superior to all of these, as Moses witnessed the beauty of God Almighty that He made manifest upon the mountain. After thirty-and then forty-day periods of vigil, Moses left the house of his wife's father, Shu'ayb, and set out with his wife and children. He said to his wife: "I perceive a fire" (20:10), and the fire that he saw was completely invisible to his wife and children. "[I will go to the fire] and bring you back a burning brand" (20:10): that is, "I will convey to you a manifestation of the fire. When Moses approached the fire, a voice called out to him from the fire that was enveloping the tree: "Verily I, I am God" (20:12). That is, Moses now witnessed what the blind man with his staff could not see, and what the mystic could only see with his heart.

These words that I ma speaking and you are hearing fall far short of the reality. Other than Moses, no one could see the light emitted by that fire, just as when revelation came to the Prophet, no one could understand what it was. Who could understand the descent of the Qur'an—it all its thirty parts[3]—to the heart of the

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[1] We are unable to identify the mystic intended here. It may be Abū Sa'īd ibn Abu'l-Khayr (350/967-440/1049), a contemporary of Avicenna, who was paid a visit by the great philosopher in about 403/1012. Abū Sa'īd and Avicenna were closeted toghther for three days, at the end of which Avicenna's pupils asked him his opinion of the mystic. He replied: "All that I know, he sees." Similarly, the disciples of Abū Sa'īd asked him for his evaluation of Avicenna. He answered: "All that I see, he knows." See Muhammad ibn Manawwar, *Asrār at-Tawhīd* (Tehran, 1348 Sh./1979), pp. 209-211.

[2] "Tranquillity of the heart": an allusion to Qur'an, 13:28: "Is it not by the remembrance of God that hearts attain tranquility?"

[3] In addition to the division of the Qur'an into suras of deiffering lengths, there is also a purely quantitative division into thirty equal parts.

Prophet, when ordinary hearts would have been incapable of bearing the burden?

The heart has special properties; it is for this reason that the Qur'an descended to the heart. The Qur'an is a mystery, a mystery within a mystery, a mystery veiled and enveloped in mystery. It was necessary for the Qur'an to undergo a process of descent in order to arrive at the lowly degree of man. Even its entry into the heart of the Prophet was a descent, and from there it had to descend still further in order to become intelligible to others. But man, too, is a mystery, a mystery within a mystery. All we see of man is his outward appearance, which is entirely animal and maybe even inferior to other animals. Man, however is an animal endowed with the aptitude of becoming human and attaining perfection, even absolute perfection, of becoming what is now inconceivable for him and transcending existence.

The Qur'an and man, then, both represent a series of mysteries. There is also a mystery pertaining to the outer world, the world of nature—namely, that you cannot perceive the essence of bodies but only their accidents. Our eyes see color and other visible qualities; our ears hear sounds; our sense of taste experiences flavor; and with our hands we feel the external dimensions of an object. But all of these are accidents. Where is the body itself to be founds? When we wish to define something, we mention it with its depth, and its length, but these too are accidents. If the body in question has he power of attraction that is likewise an accident. Any attributes you may use in your attempt to define it are accidents. Where, then, is the body itself? The body itself is a mystery, the shade or reflection of a higher mystery. It is the shadow cast by the unity of the Divine Essence, for the names and attributes of all that exists are the same names and attributes of the Essence that are made manifest to us. Were it not for the names and attributes, the world itself would be part of the unseen.

One meaning of "the unseen and the manifest"[1] may be that the world of nature itself comprises unseen and manifest sectors. The unseen sector is that which is unseen and imperceptible to us, for whenever we wish to define a thing, we speak only of its attributes, names, effects, and so on. Man's ability to perceive the thing that is a shadow of the absolute mystery is necessarily defective; unless it happens that he has advanced of means of *wilāyah*[2] to the point where the manifestation of God Almighty, in all its dimensions, has entered his heart. This mystery exists in all things; the unseen and the manifest are everywhere commingled.

"The unseen," of course, may also mean the world of the angels, the world of the intelligences, or the like. These too comprise an inner mystery and an outer appearance hidden ness and manifestation, as is implied in the expression: "He is the Outward and the Inward" (57:3). Wherever there is outwardness, there is also inwardness, and wherever there is inwardness, there is also outwardness.

All the names of God Almighty, then, participate in all the degree of being, and each name is all of the names, it is not the case for example, that the name or attribute Compassionate stands in contradistinction to the name Merciful, or the name Avenger. All of them possess everything: "However you call upon Him, His are the Most Beautiful Names" (17:110). All the Most Beautiful Names belong to the Compassionate, as they belong, too, to the Merciful and to the Eternally Self-Subsistent. It is not as if one of the names relates to one thing, and another relates to something else. Were this the case, the name Compassionate would indicate a particular aspect or degree of

[1] "The unseen and the manifest": the two realms of creation mentioned in numerous verses of the Qur'an that subsume all orders of being.

[2] *Wilāyat*: See p. 155, n. 63.

God Almighty distinct from other aspects, and the Essence of God Almighty would then become a compendium of aspects. That is impossible for absolute being; it is not divisible into aspects. Absolute being is Compassionate qua absolute being, and it is also Merciful qua absolute being. God is Compassionate with all of His Essence, and Merciful with all of His Essence, and Light with all of His Essence; He is Allah. His being Compassionate is not something separate from His being Merciful.[1]

There are those who ascend by means of gnosis to the point where a complete manifestation of the Essence enters their hearts—not, of course, this physical heart, but the heart where the Qur'an descended, the heart where Jibrā'īl alighted, the heart that is the point of departure of revelation. That manifestation contains all other manifestation within itself; it is the Supreme Name. The Messenger of God himself is also the Supreme Name made manifest, for it has been said: "We are the Most Beautiful Names."

We began tonight's talk by discussing the question of causality and pointing out that the relation of God to His creation is not one of simple causality. Indeed that relationship cannot be stated adequately, but only indicated by various approximate images. We also discussed the sense of the "dot under the *bā*," always supposing the tradition in question to be authentic. Then we spoke of the various forms of manifestation: the manifestation of the Essence to the Essence, the manifestation of the Essence to the attributes, and the manifestation of the Essence to beings. This last constitutes our beings. To have recourse to another metaphor, imagine one hundred mirrors

[1] That is, although the two names are separate in meaning, (see no. 15 above), they do not designate separate "aspects" of God, which would be to the entirety of the Essence.

positioned so that the light of the sun is reflected in each. From one point of view, you might say that there are a hundred lights—one hundred separate, finite lights, each in a mirror. All of them, however, are the same light, the same manifestation of the sun visible in a hundred mirrors. Let me repeat that the image is approximate.

The manifestation of God Almighty takes place by means of individuations, which is not to say that the individuation is separate from the manifestation or light. When light manifests itself as an act, the concomitant is individuation. "Name" in the expression "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" means the name of the Essence, and the name Allah is the manifestation of the Essence that includes all manifestations. Compassionate and Merciful are part of this same comprehensive manifestation; they do not refer to separate things. Allah, Compassionate, and Merciful are like three names for the same entity. There is but one manifestation: He is Allah with all His Essence, Compassionate with all His Essence, and Merciful with all His Essence. It is impossible that this not be so, for if it were not, God would be limited and thus contingent.

As I said previously, "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" is syntactically connected to: "Praise belongs to God." We may therefore paraphrase the two expressions taken together as follows. "All instances of praise belong (or absolute praise belongs) to the comprehensive manifestation of Allah, Who with the entirety of His Essence is also Compassionate and Merciful." If one takes the second form of manifestation—that of the Essence to the attributes—the name indicating comprehensive manifestation is equivalent to absolute will; all things occur by means of it, by means of the name Allah. Finally, if we consider manifestation through the acts, the name Allah as a comprehensive manifestation will be equivalent to reality. To summarize, the, the name Allah is the name

indicating the comprehensive manifestation within the Essence itself, with respect to the attributes, and with respect to the acts.

There is much else to be said concerning the names Compassionate and Merciful, but we must be brief. I hope we all feel that the discussion of these matters is necessary. Some people in their hearts totally deny all the concerns of mysticism and gnosis. He who lives at the level of an animal cannot believe that anything exists beyond his bestial state. We, however, must believe in the validity of these concerns, and the first step toward advancing beyond our present state is to refrain from denying them. A person should not deny whatever he is ignorant of. It was Avicenna who said: "Whoever denies something without proof forfeits the attribute of humanity."

Just as the affirmation of something depends upon proof, so, too, does its denial. To deny is different from to confess ignorance. There are certain hearts that are given to denial; they deny everything they are unable to perceive and thereby "forfeit the attribute of humanity." A person must have proof in order both to affirm something and to deny it. Otherwise he must say: "I do not know; it may be so: Anything you hear, regard as possible; it is possible that it might be, and also possible that it might not be. But why should we engage in denial, when our hands cannot reach beyond this world, and what they touched is only a small part of this world? What we know of this world is very limited; many things of which we were ignorant a hundred years ago have now become known, and others will become known in the future. We who have not been able to comprehend fully the world of nature and man-why should we deny what has been granted to the *awliyā'*? Certain hearts are predisposed to denial, hearts that are entirely deprived of the penetration of truth and light. A person with such a heart will not say, "I do not know"; he will say instead, "It is not true." He will accuse the mystics of talking nonsense, whereas in reality, he is veiled from the perception of what they are saying. The same concerns that

the deniers label "nonsense" are also to be found in the Qur'an and the Sunna, although the deniers would not dare admit it.

Such denial is a type of unbelief, although not, of course, unbelief as defined by the *Sharī'ah*. It is unbelief to deny what one is ignorant of. All the misfortunes that beset man arise out of his inability to perceive reality and his consequent denial of it. Unable to attain what the *awliyā'* have attained, he denies it and falls prey to the worst form of unbelief.

The first step to take is to refrain from denying what is in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, what the *awliyā'* have said, what the mystics and philosophers have said, within the limits of their perception. (There are some who go so far in their denial as to say: "I will not believe unless I can dissect God with this knife.") Let us at least not deny what the prophets and the *awliyā'* have said, for unless we take this first step, we cannot take the second. Denial does not allow the denier to pursue anything unless it lies immediately in front of him. If a person wished to emerge from the dark abode in which he is caught, he must at least grant the possibility that all these matters are true, for otherwise he will remain a prisoner behind the wall of denial. Let him pray to God that He unfold a path before him, a path that leads where he must go, for it is God alone who can unfold the path.

Once a man ceases his denial and beseeches God for a path, a path will gradually open itself up before him, for God will not refuse him. Let us, then, at least attain the stage of not denying what is contained in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. There are some who claim to believe in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, but deny whatever contains that lies outside their perception. They do not express their denial outright with respect to the Qur'an and the Sunna, but if someone begins to speak on the mystical matters contained therein, they will begin to talk nonsense and deny the truth of what is said. Such denial deprives man of many things. It

prevents him from attaining him from attaining the state needed to set out on the path; it is an obstacle that bars his way.

I recommend to al of you, then, that you at least grant the possibility that what the *awliyā'* attained and experienced is true. You might not declare openly, "It is possible"; but do not make a downright denial and say. "It is all nonsense"; for if you do, you will not be able to set out on the path. So, remove this obstacle.

I hope that we may remove this veil of denial from our hearts and ask God Almighty to acquaint us with the language of the Qur'an. For the Qur'an has been revealed in its own distinct language, and we must become familiar with that language. The Qur'an possesses everything. It is like a vast banquet that God has spread out in front of all humanity and that everyone partakes of according to his own appetite. The sicknesses of the heart deprive man of his appetite, but if his heart is healthy, he will partake of the banquet according to his appetite. The world, too, is a vast banquet and all creatures partake of it according to their needs and capacities: some are content with mere grass, others eat fruit, and still others aspire to more elaborate nourishment. Man partakes of this banquet of being in one way when he is at the animal level and in another way when he has risen above it. So, too, with the Qur'an: everyone partakes of its banquet according to his own capacities and appetite. The highest share is reserved for the one to whom it was revealed: "The only person who truly knows the Qur'an is he who was addressed by it." We should not despair, though, but rather should take our own share of the banquet.

The first step is to stop imagining that nothing exists except nature, and that the Qur'an was revealed exclusively to discuss matters of nature and society. Imagine this is to deny prophethood, for the Qur'an was revealed to make men into men, and all matters of wordly and social concern are means to this end.

Worship and prayer are also means to this end, the end of eliciting the true nature of man and making if manifest, of bringing it forth from potentiality into actuality. Natural man should become divine man in the sense that everything pertaining to him should become divine; whatever he looks at he will see God. All the prophets were sent to assist man in attaining this goal. They did not wish to establish a government or administer the world as an end in itself, although this was part of their mission, for even the animals have a wordly existence and administer their part of the world.

Those who have eyes to see with know that justice is an attribute of God Almighty, and so they strive to establish a government of justice and to ensure social justice. But this is not their ultimate aim; it is merely a means for advancing man toward that goal for the sake of which all the prophets were sent.

May God Almighty support us and grant us success in all things.

Fifth Session

Before proceeding, I would like to raise a point, which you might find useful or even necessary.

The disagreements that occur between the visionary and the scholar are caused by their failure to understand each other's languages, for each has his own distinctive way of expressing things. I do not know whether you have heard the story of the three people—one a Persian, one a Turk, and the other an Arab—who were discussing what they should eat for lunch. The Persian said, "Let us eat angur"; the Arab said, let us have 'anab"; and the Turk said, "As for me, I would prefer *üzüm*." Now all three words mean "grapes," but since they did not understand each other's languages, they argued until each had to fetch what he desired and they realized they had all wanted the same thing.[1]

[1] This celebrated story is taken from the *Mathnawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī, where the Persian, the Arab, and the Turk are joined by a Greek who expresses a preference for *istafil*. See *Mathnawī*, II, lines 3681-3686.

Different languages express the same thing in different ways. The philosophers for example, have their own language and terminology; so do the mystics, the *fuqahā*, and even the poets. The *ma'ṣūmīn*[1] (upon whom be peace) also have their own language, and we must examine the language of each of the other four groups to see which is closest to the language of the *ma'ṣūmīn* and also to that of the Qur'an. The matter to be expressed is the same: no rational human being who believes in the divine unity will disagree that God Almighty exists and that He is the origin of all existence: all creatures are the outcome of this origin. No rational person will believe that a man dressed in jacket and trousers, or in turban and cloak, could be God; such a man is a created being. When it comes to interpreting the relationship of God and His creation, however, and choosing terms to express it, disagreements arise. Let us see, then, why the mystics express matters in a certain way, what prompts them to do so.

It is my intention to reconcile the various groups, of course, and to point out that they are all saying the same thing. I do not wish to justify all the philosophers, all the mystics, or all the fuqaha. As the saying goes, "There's many a cloak that deserves the fire,"[2] and the members of each group frequently may deserve criticism. Conversely, within each group there have been many pure individuals, and the disagreements that have arisen have been caused by the failure to comprehend each other's terminology. For example, within the madrasa, the *Akhbārī*s[3] and

[1] *Ma'ṣūmīn*: those possessing the quality of *'ismat* (see p. 156, no. 67 above): i.e., the Prophet, *Fāṭimah*, and the Twelve Imāms.

[2] In this saying, the cloak (*khirqah*) serves as a symbol of the *Ṣūfī*, particularly the one who puts trust in outward appearances.

[3] Akhbārīs: a school of Shi'i law that in outward to a narrow reliance on the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet and the Imāms, rejecting secondary sources of law. It was largely displaced in Iran toward the end of the

the *Uṣūlīs*[1] have denounced each other as unbelievers, even though their concerns and beliefs are identical.

The philosophers, or some of them, use terminology like "cause of causes," "primary cause," "secondary cause," "causality," and so forth. This dry terminology of "causality," "cause and effect," "principle and derivative" was especially used at the pre-Islamic philosophers, but our fuqaha have also made free use of it, although, at the same time, they speak of "Creator" and "creation." Then there are certain mystics who use a different terminology, such as "manifest," "manifestation," and the like. Let us see why they use those terms, and why the terms also occur in the usage of the Imāms (upon whom be peace), who also refrain from speaking of "causality," although they do mention "creation." Why is it that the mystics refrain from using the terminology of the philosophers or common usage, and instead express matters differently?

To speak of cause and effect means that one being—the cause—brings another being—the effect—into existence, so that on the one hand, we have the cause, and on the other, the effect. What do we mean by "on the one hand... and on the other"? Is there a spatial difference between the cause and the effect, as there is with the sun and its light? The sun possesses the light, insofar as the light emerges from it and is its manifestation, but the sun is a substance located in one place, and its light is another substance located in another place, although it is the

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eighteenth century, but it continues to exist in Shi'i communities of Kuwait, Bahrayn, and the Qatif region of Eastern Arabia.

[1] *Uṣūlīs*: the adversaries of the *Akhbārīs*. They hold that the *faqīh* may legitimately apply rational exertion to the solution of legal problems. The Iranian religious scholars have been overwhelmingly *Uṣūlī* since the late eighteenth century. For an account of the disputes between the *Akhbārīs* and Unis, see Ḥāmid Algar, Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906 (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 33-36.

effect produced by the sun. Can we speak of the Essence of the necessary being acting as cause in the sense of natural causation, as when, for example, fire causes heat or the sun causes light, where the effects in both cases is spatially separated from the cause? Can we say that the Supreme Principle is separate from other beings, or that they are spatially and temporally separate from Him?

As I said before, it is difficult to imagine fully the nature of abstract being, particularly the Supreme Principle of all being, God Almighty, and the manner in which He holds all being in His sustaining embrace.

What is meant by the Qur'anic saying: "He is with you wherever you are" (57:4)? Does "with you" imply some type of physical presence?

Phrases like this have been used in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* because they are the closest approximation to a reality that cannot be fully expressed. It is extremely difficult to understand the concepts of Creator and created. God Almighty is the Creator and we are created by Him, but does this involve a special difference, and what is the nature of the relationship of the Creator and His creation? Does it resemble the relationship of fire and the effect it creates, or that of the soul and its visual, auditory, and other capacities? The latter provides a more adequate parallel than any other image, but it still does not fully correspond to the sustaining embrace of all beings, for that embrace means that there is no place in creation where He does not exist.

"Were you to let a rope descend to the nether parts of the earth..."[1] you would find there. This and similar traditions are not intended to point out a literal truth, that God Almighty is

[1] The first part of a tradition of the Prophet, indicating the universal presence of God.

restrictively located in a certain place like a contingent being, like one of us dressed in turban and cloak. No rational person would make such a statement.

Expressions implying a location for God Almighty are merely attempts to make relationship of the Creator and creation comprehensible. It may happen, however, that someone not fully conversant with these matters might say of a certain thing: "This is God." It is for this reason that the philosophers, including the Muslims, have said: "Pure being is all things, but is not a single thing among them."

This statement is not a contradiction, despite its appearance, because pure being rejects all deficiency and possesses all perfection, whereas discrete beings are all deficient. If pure being were then to become identified with a discrete being, it would become deficient, whereas it is complete and exempt from all deficiency. Being exempt from all deficiency, it is impossible that it should lack a single perfection, and every perfection found in every being therefore comes it and its trace or manifestation. When the manifestation exists in the essence in simple (as opposed to compound) form, it is the totality of perfection and the essence of all perfection.

The statement that pure being is "all things" means, then, that it is all perfection, and the statement that it is "not a single thing among them" means that it is free of all deficiency. That pure being is all things should not be taken to mean that you and I are pure being, for pure being is "not a single thing among them," and it alone is the totality of perfection.

There are some who, failing to understand matters properly, have quoted in this connection the saying: "Colorlessness fell prey to color." The verse in which this saying occurs is not at all related to the matter under discussion, which is the nature of reality. Instead, the verse concerns a war or dispute that arose

between two men; but failing to understand the statement, people have regarded it as blasphemous.[1]

The verse it occurs in seeks to answer the question of why wars arise in the world. What is meant by "color" in this verse is "attachment," another expression that occurs in the usage of some poets, as, for example, in the phrase "who is free of all that takes on the color of attachment."[2] As for colorlessness," it means lack of attachment to anything in the natural realm. When such attachment no longer exists, dispute and war will vanish. All disputes that arise derive from the covetous attachment of two or more adversaries to the natural realm; the adversaries necessarily oppose each other in everything.

The poet means the primordial disposition of man is free of color, and when this color does not exist, dispute will also not exist. If Pharaoh had been, like Moses, without the color of attachment, no dispute would have arisen between the two, and if all the people in the world were prophets, no dispute would ever arise. Disputes arise out of competing attachments. But colorlessness "fell prey to color: man's primordial disposition, free of the color of attachment, and discord arose. Were it not for the color of attachment, Pharaoh would have made peace with Moses."

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[1] "Colorlessness fell prey to color": a quotation from Jalāl al-Dīn Rumī, *Mathnawī*, I, line 2467: "When colorssness fell prey to color, a Moses came into conflict a Moses." The meaning is that Praraoh, in his primordial nature free of attachment and color (and therefore himself "a Moses"), became colored by attachment and thus the antithesis of Moses. The erroneous interpretation of the verse that Imām Khomeinī is seeking to correct sees "colorlessness" as pure being and "color" as things in their multiplicity.

[2] See Hāfiz, *Diwān*, eds. Furūghī and Ghānī (Tehran, n.d.), p. 37. The complete line reads: "I am a slave to the aspiration of him who is free of all that takes on the color of attachment."

This is the true sense of the verse, on that relates to two separate beings that are at war with each other, not to the nature of arate beings that are with each other, not to the nature of reality or the relation of the Creator of creation.

Some people, who have failed to understand the true meaning of certain terms and expressions used by the mystics, have gone so far as to declare them unbelievers. But let us see whether these concepts and terms do not also occur in the prayers of the Imāms (upon whom be peace).

In the Invocations of Sha'bān,[1] which were recited by all the Imāms (something true of no other prayer or invocation), we read as follows: "O God, grant me total separation from other-than-You and attachment to You and brighten the vision of our hearts with the light of looking upon You, so that they may pierce the veils of light and attain the fountainhead of magnificence, and our spirits may be suspended from the splendor of Your sanctity. O God, make me one of those who answer You when You call, and who cry out at Your splendor."[219] What is meant by these pleas? What did the Imām mean by "total separation from other-than-You and attachment to You"? Why did he petition God for this form of spiritual advancement? He pleads: "Brighten the vision of our hearts." What could this mean if not a form of vision enabling man to look upon God Almighty? As for piercing "the veils of light" and attaining "the fountainhead of magnificence," and our spirits being "suspended from the splendor of God's sanctity," this is none other than the state that the Qur'an describes Moses as have in attained, and none other than the effacement and vanishing of which the mystics speak. Similarly, the process of "attaining" the fountainhead of magnificence is precisely the same as the

[1] See p. 349

"attaining" to which the mystics refer.[1] As for "the fountainhead of magnificence," it is, of course, God Almighty; since all magnificence derives from Him, He is its fountainhead.

The terminology used by the mystics, then, is consistent with the Qur'an and the asunna, and for this reason, the concept of manifestation they employ is to be preferred to the constricting notions of causality used the philosophers. "Creator" and "creation" are the terms employed in common usage, but "manifestation" is also preferable to them since it more closely approximates what is an ineffable reality. One may easily assent to the relation of God to His creation, but to imagine it is extremely difficult. How can we imagine a being that is present everywhere, that is both hidden in things and manifest in them? Indeed, God is the cause of creation, but to say that is not enough, for God is present in all things; in their outward in inward aspects, "There is naught that is without Him." There is no way that such truths can be fully expressed in words; all that is possible is, for those who have the capacity, to petition God for the immediate experience of reality, as in the Invocations of Sha'bān.

The differences that exist in terminology, then, are no reason for one group to denouncing its accusers as ignorant.

We must first understand what is being said, and in the case of the mystic, we must comprehend the inner state that prompts him to express himself in a certain way. Light may sometimes enter his heart in such a manner that he finds himself saying, "Everything is God." Remember that in the prayers you recite, expressions occur like "the eye of God," "the ear of God," "the hand of God," and all of these are in the same vein as the terminology of the mystics. There is also the tradition to the effect that when you place alms in the hands of the pauper, you

[1] See Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, *Mafātīh al-Jinān*, p. 216.

are placing them in the hands of God. Then, too, there is the Qur'anic verse: "When you cast the dust, you did not cast it; rather God cast it" (8:17). What does it mean? That God the dust instead of the Prophet? That is the literal meaning, which you all accept, but those who experience the reality that is indicated in this verse cannot see matters in the same way, and are bound to express themselves differently. Nonetheless, you will the expressions they use throughout the Qur'an and especially in the prayers of the Imāms. There is no reason to regard them which suspicion. We must understand why they express themselves in their particular, distinct way, and why they have deliberately abandoned the common usage of which they are certainly aware.

They have insisted on doing this out of a refusal to sacrifice reality to themselves, and instead, they have sacrificed themselves to reality. If we understand what such persons are attempting to say, we will also understand the terms that they use, which are, after all, expressions derived from the Qur'an and the traditions of the Imāms. None of us has the right to say of a certain person or thing, "This is God," and no rational person would accept such a claim. However, one may perceive a manifestation of Gos that is completely impossible to express other than by formulations such as this, which occurs in a prayer concerning the *awliyā'*: "There is no difference between You and them, except that they are Your servants, whose creation and dissolution lies in Your hands."

All expressions are necessarily inadequate, but those of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* come closer to conveying the truth than all others. Not everyone, of course, is able to comprehend and correctly employ these expressions. There have been some persons, however, who, having a complete and exact mastery of all the sciences, would talk about the manifestation and visage of God. Some of them were my contemporaries, and I was closely acquainted with them.

So make peace with those given to the use of a certain terminology. I repeat, it is not my wish to defend any category of persons as a whole, or to generalize concerning them. For example, when I speak of the religious scholars, I do not mean that they all possess a given set of attributes. What I wisg to make clear is that no class should be rejected as a whole, and that no one should be denounced as an unbeliever merely because he uses the language of the mystics. First, see what he is saying and then try to understand it; if you do, I do not think you will deny its truth. Bear in mind the parable with which I started: the difference between *'anāb*, *angūr*, and *ūzūm* is the same as that between "causality," "creation," and "manifestation."

This problem of terminology is caused by the difficulty of discussing a being who is everywhere but is not identifiable with any object, although we do encounter the terms "hand of God" and "eye of God," as for example in, "God's hand is over their hands" (48:10). In what sense is God's hand over their hands? Clearly, in a supramaterial sense, but beyond that we can say very little. In just the same way that God Almighty is exalted beyond commingling with men or substantially conjoining with anything, so, too, He is exalted beyond our fully comprehending a single one of His manifestations. Even His manifestations in their ground are unknown to us. We still believe and do not reject, and we hope that those matters occurring in the Qur'an and the Sunna that we believe in will be made accessible to us.

God says in *sūrah al-Ḥadīd*: "He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Ineard," and also, "He is with you wherever you are." According to a certain tradition, full comprehension of these expressions, as well as the rest of this sura's first six verses, is reserved for those who shall come at the end of time. And who among us understand even what is meant by "the end of time"? Probably not more than one or two people in the entire world.

The important point to be noted is that Islam does not merely consist of its ordinances. Ordinances are secondary, not the essence of religion, and the essence should not be sacrificed to the secondary. Once the late Shaykh Muḥammad Bahārī,[1] in seeing a certain person approach, said: "He is a just and unbelieving person." We asked how this could be. He answered: "He is just in that he acts according to the stipulations of the law, but he is an unbeliever because the god he worships is not God."

There is also the story in tradition of an ant who thought God had two feelers, for in his self-love, he regarded the possession of two feelers as the mark of perfection! The ant is also mentioned in the Qur'an, in the verse, "When they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said to its fellows: 'O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his troops destroy you, for they are unaware.' So Solomon smiled, amused at her speech" (27:18-19). The common and that we see everywhere regarded Solomon, then, as unaware. Similarly the hoopoe said to him: "I have compassed territory that you have not compassed" (27:20). Now Solomon was a prophet, and one of his companions had brought the throne of Bilqis to him "in the twinkling of an eye" (27:40). (This was something unprecedented: was it some form of communication, or was the throne destroyed and then recreated)? It is also said in a certain tradition that another of the companions of Solomon knew one letter of the Supreme Name, Nonetheless, the hoopoe said to Solomon, who had companions of this rank and whose commands unknown to Solomon.

We find certain scholars, however, whose rank is obviously less than that of Solomon, denying the validity of mysticism and

[1] Shaykh Muḥammad Bahārī: presumably a contemporary of Imām Khomeinī during his years of study at Qum.

thus depriving themselves of a form of knowledge. It is regrettable.

When I first went to Qom (soon after the religious teaching institution had been established),[1] the late Mīrzā Akbar Ḥakīm[2] (may God have mercy upon him) was still alive. A certain pious individual (may God have mercy upon him, too) said: "See the level to which Islam had fallen; the doors of Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar are open to receive students." For some of the *'ulamā*, among them the late Khwansari[3] and the late Ishrāqī,[4] would go to Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar's house to study mysticism with him. Now Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar was a very worthy man, but when he died, there was so much suspicion about him that a preacher found it necessary to testify from the minbar that he had seen him reading the Qur'an. This greatly disturbed the late Shāhābādī.[5] It is regrettable that some of the *'ulamā* should entertain those suspicions and deprive themselves of the benefits to be gained from studying mysticism. Similar attitudes prevail toward philosophy, which is actually very straightforward. Now if the *'ulamā* in question had achieved the same goal that is common

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[1] See the introduction to this anthology, p. 14.

[2] Mīrzā 'Alī Akhbar Hakim: also Yazdī, one of Imām Khomeinī's teachers of philosophy, and himself the foremost pupil of the celebrate Mullā Hādī Sabzevārī (1212/1797-1295/1878). He dired in 1344/1925. See Muḥammad Raḍī. *Asrār al-Ḥujjah* (Qum, 1332 Sh. 1953), I, 216.

[3] Khwānsārī: see p. 165, n. 188.

[4] Ishrāqī: more fully, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Ishrāqī, a celebrated scholar and preacher, 1313/1895-1368/1949. He used to include political comment in the sermons he gave in Qum; he was also the father of Imām Khomeinī's son-in-law, Ḥujjat al-Islām Shahāb Ishrāqī. See Raḍī, *Asrār al-Ḥujjah*, I, 135-137.

[5] Shāhābādī: more fully, Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhābādī, a master of both the religious and the rational sciences. 1292/1875-1369/1950. He spent the years between 1347/1928 and 1354/1935 teaching in Qum, where Imām Khomeinī was among his foremost students. See Razi, *Asrār al-Ḥujjah*, I, 217-219.

to all the groups, such disputes would not have arisen. Those who wear cloaks and turbans and denounce the mystics as unbelievers do not understand what they are saying; if they did, they would not denounce them.

The whole problem is caused by differing terms and expressions. Some people find that the language of causality does not correspond to reality. For as I have repeatedly said in the course of these talks, the name is not separate from the thing named. The name is a manifestation, not s sign comparable to a milestone. The term most suggestive of the relation of creation to God, although still inadequate, is the Qur'anic term *āyah*.[1]

The Qur'an is like a banquet which everyone must partake in accordance with his capacity. It belongs to everyone, not to any particular group; there is a share in it for everyone. The same is true of the prayers of the Imāms (upon whom be peace). They are replete with mystical insight and may be regarded as the tongue or interpreter of the Qur'an, interpreting those aspects of it that lie beyond the reach of other men. People should not be dissuaded from the recitation and study of these prayers; no one should say, "We wish to confine ourselves to the Qur'an." It is by means of these prayers that people make the acquaintance of God, and once they do so, neither the world nor their own selves will be of value in their eyes any longer, and they will set to work for God. Those who recited these prayers and experienced the states reflected in them were the very ones who wielded the sword for God's sake. The Qur'an and prayer are not separate from each other. Would it occur to anyone to say, "we have the Qur'an., so we no longer need the Prophet"? The Qur'an and the Prophet belong together, and they shall never be separate. Those

[1] Aya: sign. Cf. Qur'an. 41:53: "We shall show them Our signs (ayat) on the horizons and in their own selves"; that is. God has placed in man's cosmic environment and within his own being indications of His reality.

who wish to bring about such separations—the Qur'an from the Imāms, the Imāms from their prayers—even going so far as to burn books of prayer, are motivated by the error that invariably befalls those who try to venture beyond their innate limits.

Kasrawī,[1] for example, was a historian well-versed in history and also a good writer. But he became arrogant and went so far as to claim prophethood. He laid aside the prayers of the Imāms completely, although he continued to accept the Qur'an. Unable to rise to the level of prophethood, Kasrawī brought prophethood down to his own level.

The mystics, the mystically inclines poets, and the philosophers are all saying the same thing, although they use different idioms. The poets have their own terminology and idioms, and among them, Ḥāfiẓ[2] has his own peculiar mode of expression,

If I make repeated use of the same expressions—"manifestation" and so forth—do not object that I have mentioned them already; they must constantly be repeated. Once a group of merchants came to see the late Shāhābādī (may God have mercy upon him), and he began to speak to them on the same mystical topics that he taught to everyone. I asked him whether it was appropriate to speak to them of such matters and he replies: "Let them be exposed just once to these 'heretical' teachings!" I too now find it incorrect to divide people into categories and pronounce some incapable of understanding these matters.

A subject for further discussion would be "the Compassionate, the Merciful," as it occurs both in the *bismillāh*,

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[1] Kasrawī. See no. 68 above.

[2] Ḥāfiẓ: the supreme master of Persian lyrical poetry, 726/1325-792/1390. His verse is marked by a rich interplay between different levels of meaning—mystical and profane, personal and political.

and in the third verse of the *sūrah*, in particular whether the two attributes in the expression *bismillāh* describe the name or Allah.

PART FOUR

The Commentary Hints on the *Ḥamd Sūrah* Extracted from Different Works of Imām Khomeinī

The Importance and the Superiority of the Ḥamd Sūrah

Then, the beginning of the God's divine genetic book, the rank of whom is lofty and glorious, with His Own powerful hand has written, and the entire book through the Comprehensive divine Being, being away from multiplicity and ambiguity, on one aspect is the asbract world of wisdom, spiritual angles and the determination of the first "Will" there is in invocation "*al-Jāmi'ah* Innovacation".

"God has started by you". Because the horizon existence of the innocent Imāms (*ṣ*) conforms with the horizon of the "Divine Will". As the God Alimighty has expressed this meaning.

"Then, it came near and nearer, then as the size of less than the size of two arc length" and the innocent Imāms in the "*wilāyah*" point of view are united. "Our beginning, Our mid, and Our end is Muḥammad (*ṣ*). We are all Muḥammad and we are all one single light. And because the whole book is within the verse Praise, and Praise as a criterian multiplicity being there is in *bismillāh ar-raḥman ar-raḥīm* and in it the *bā* of *bismillāh* and underneath (*bā*) the (point)-dot 'Alī (*ṣ*) as it has been related, he said: "I am that dot." And it has been written that the being through has been appeared and the pious through the dot ***bā*** has been separated from his own beloved."

And in this Divine Book and this holy verse is the natural world and this transitory world and the current events. And this is according to the desending curve, otherwise, the beginning and the ending are the same, because whatever from the Divine Heaven has been descended, on that day which;

And between the End of the book and the verses, the chapters:

We consider it thousand years going upwords. In this case the Messenger's completion and his holy being who is the first being as it has been mentioned "We are the antecedents to the coming next ones."

And between the beginning and ending Divine Book there are verses, chapters and parts.

Single unit book, each general world is chapter, part and some of its units. And each particle realm, is a verse and a chapter, and each stage of the each realm, or each particle of its particles will be a verse or a word perchance the God's word Almighty: "And it is His sign that he has created you from the clay, then you are human beings who are scattered upon the earth...", with this criterion is reffering.

And the chain of being are considered as many books and declarations, each realm will be an independent book, having so may parts and chapters, verses and terms according to the number of persons and articles therein.

And perchance, the Divine's words saying; "There is no any dry Wet but in the book is clearly clarified", is the evidence for it.

And if we mix the two creterions, an absolute book would be that enjoys many volumes, each of them having so many chapters, parts and units, verse and divisions.

Verse Praise which is in Qur'an, and it is the first verse and it is special for praying, and prayer without Praise is not

considered prayer.[1] The same verse "Praise" contains the entire knowledge, but those who are very sharp and subtle must pay attention deeply thereupon, well, We are not of these group. We say the *al-ḥamdulillāh*" means it is deserved. "*al-ḥamdulillāh rabb al-'ālamīn*" means God is to be deserved having the entire praises. But Qurān dess not say this, it does not say that there is no "*Ḥamd*" at all, any where except for God, the one who worships idol, is itself "*Ḥamd*" namely it is for God, but he does not realize it the problem is that we are not aware, we are ignorant. The one who say: [*iyyāka na'budu*], it means infaut that all of us seek your help, we want, God's will. In deed practically this so that except God there is none, there is no helper and, there is no other power and authonty but God. We all worship for God, we seek His help. In fact the praise within this world is for God only there is no praise, but for God Almighty, these who praise, for example, they praise Satan and the Kings and so on, they do not realize that they are praiseing God, they are not aware of this fact, but praise is for the perfect One, praise is not for the defeceit ones.

Any seeks help from anyone, in fact he is seeking help from God, this is what the verse mentions.

And for those who are aware, if only this verse will be fulfilled, all the problems will be sold, because when the man would realize that all things are from him, he has no fear of anyone any more, we are terrified of the powers because we think they are the true power. When man considers Him as the main power man understands that He is everything, he does not care about anyone else. We are terrified because we are not able to realize where is the real power, the power which is useful for the entire people, the power which is being used for the people's benefit.[2]

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[1] *Sūrah al-An'ām*: 59.

[2] *Sahīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 19, pp. 354-355.

Interpretation

Bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm

In reality *bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* possess some of being and stages of descending and ascending, and according to the conducts and reality growth have had multiplicity facts and within the heart of the spiritual wayfarer, according to their stages and states had some manifestations. And naming which exists at the beginning of each verse comes from the Qur'anic verses according to the fact, it differs from the othere naming in other verse, some of these naming are greater, some are great, some one comprehensive and encompassing and some are limited, and the conception of each verse will be understood by the little which comes upon its head.

Therefore, whatever for the beginning of its principle being and its stage has come is different from that, which is for the beginning of the stage of the ranks hving come, and the learnend and the theologians who are except there about know it well.

Thus, Amīr, the head of the pious (*'a*) has been quoted; Whatever there is in Qur'an, there is in verse praise, and whatever exists in verse praise, there is in *bā*, and whatever there

is in *bā* there is in dot wnderneath, and I am the dot underneath *bā*."

And in othere namings this does not exist. Because the "*Fātiḥah al-Kitāb*" contains all detailes, from *al-ḥamd*, to the *yawm ad-dīn*. The Resurrection Day" and all the creature's states and its ranks by the God's saying" *iyyāka na'budu* till the end of the holy verse, has been written. And the whole circle vastly has come at the end in "*ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*" collectively and in the "Name" collectively, and in *bā* in which the *alef* (a) of essence is hidden.

And this case exists merely in "*Fātiḥah al-Kitāb*". That throughwhich the being has come to existence in the way of multiplicity and in "*bā*" in which "*bā*" is hidden in its essence in the way of unity multiplicity and in the point underneath "*bā*" in which is fluent in the way of having been appeared. And such encompassing and naming is only in the Divine "*Fātiḥah al-Kitāb*" by which the Being has been begun and the lover with the beloved has been connected and the reality of this naming, multiplicity and descriptive alike, is of the sacred naming and by which the creature's right. And this is the greatest and most important Divine's Names and it is the main teacher and leading of all, the absent being, the vision and within the ascending and the desending curve. And some other namings have been derived from the limitation of this holy name and are of its stages, and each naming which is for the beginning of any action—eating, drinking, making love and so on are considered in this case, they are all the determinations of this absolute name, and each name according to its stage and limitation. And the name which comes in this category is not the Supreme Name, because the Supreme Name is above the stage of naming such ordinary articles.

Thus, name, for instance, in the stage of eating, drinking is the determinated from the Supreme Name, derived for the drinker, eater or the eating intention, drinking intention or feel

like drinking and eating. And all these affairs are all within the dertermination of the Supreme Name.

One of the important personalities of conduct in his own book *The Secret of Ṣalat* has written a topic as follows:

"It Beems necessary to point out. This problem which has been caused a quarrel issue among the learned writers, and that is when somebody wants to read and utter *bismillāh* without verse. The problem derives from this point when *bismillāh* is uttered separately, because *bismillāh* is the part of the any verse—it can not be separated—it can not be repeated or omitted for other verse. Only for the especial verse which belongs to.

Thus, being the Qur'anic of this terms is due to this point that we want repeat whatever the Jebrel had read to the Messenger (ṣ), otherwise it has nothing except whatever it has been mentioned.

"And the answer to these criticisms is that the whole Qur'an contains the realities of different worlds and has been affected by expecial effects, and reading its mere realisties is not whatever the Jebrel read in Verse Praise, rather the reading of Jebrel has nothing to do with nature of Qur'an. *Bismillāh* is a single unique Verse for itself which comes at the beginning of all Verses, there its nature does not change according to the coming down of each verse. And *bismillāh* in Verse Praise belongs firmly to that verse and all.

And the repeatition of *bismillāh* is not merely indicating that each verse should have its own *bismillāh*, it means it is not necessary to use *bismillāh* from a special Verse—for the other—rather, reading a verse, a special one, and reading *bismillāh* with the same intention and then reading another verse is acceptable. And such variety is nothing but multy intention which can not be seen." And uttering such words by "*qadasa allāh nafsuhū az-zakiyyah*" is odd, because the main point considers the repeatition of coming down—the verse—the source of reality of *bismillāh*. Of course his saying that the intention of whatever

Jebrel read for the Messenger (ṣ) is considered necessary is not correct. But you will find out the reality according to whatever have been mentioned, up to your ability and capacity, that the *bismillāh* at the beginning of each verse is different from the other *bismillāh* rather naming changes according to different persons, even for the individual is somehow different.

It should be noticed that *bismillāh* in each verse according to the conduct of the theologians, belongs to that verse itself, and it does not belong to "*asta'īn*, and so on, because "God's Name" is the whole "Will" according to the manifestation Stage. And it is the sacred stage according to the Unity stage, and it is the whole world according to the multiplicity Unity which is the entire universe and it is the stages of being. And according to each verse of the holy Qur'an, which belongs to Besmellah, rather verbally exists in its manifestation and conception. Thus the meaning of *bismillāh* differs, rather it follows the following after it, *bismillāh* means the stage of absolute "Will" the expansion of the perfect state, and the owner of the stage of mercifulness which is the manifestation of the nature and:

Therefore, the spiritual wayfarer and Gnostic of God in one aspect see the whole actions and the creatures the manifestation of the absolute Will and being defaced within, and in this case the being of Unity over comes and *bismillāh* in the whole verses of Qur'an and in all actions finds in a single unique conception. And in another aspect, which refers to different of different, sees a single conception for each *bismillāh* at the beginning of each verse which differs to other *bismillāh*.

Then, your heart after having purified from the tendencies towards nature, if it is lighted by the Qur'an's light, you will comprehend this subtle point which is in the verses that is beyond the reach of the ordinary people then. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* is the God's saying in which all the praises are circled and any praise refers and returns to it. And if there would not have been

His perfection and His Beauty this limitation determination had not existed.

Interpretation

Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabb al-'ālamīn

And if whatever the learned men believe, you add to this, as they say: "*bismillāh* belongs to *al-ḥamdu lillāh*. You will see that the praises of none of the praiser is accepted except with the God's Name. Therefore God's name is the main goal to which any praise is being referred, the parised and the praiser is He, Himself.

Interpretation

Ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm

The stage of Beneficence which is the expansion of the existence and the stage of mercifulness which the expansion of the perfection of the Being, derived from the stage of the absolute "Will" and the stage of multiplicity and dermination and the former one has the quality case of unity to the latter ones. For this reason *bismillāh* in verse *bismillāh* follows the name "God", this matter in Ibn 'Arabī in his Victories Book mentions:

"The world has been come to existence through *bismillāh ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*.

The Beneficence is the expansion stage of the being and the Mercifulness the expansion stage of the perfection being. Thus the being through the mercifulness has been appeared, and each being through the blessing of beneficence has become perfect and has reached to its innate stage. And due to this point, it has been said:

"Oh the Merciful in this world and the Beneficent in the Hereafter" and "the Beneficient to all the creatures and Merciful only to the pious." Thus, through His own reality of Beneficient enlivened the figures and created them and through His reality of

Merciful, has led them to the right Path. And the down of the God's Mercifulness and its effect is more obvious in the Hereafter.

And in some works have been mentioned "Oh the Beneficient in the world and in the Hereafter and the Merciful both in this and that world." And this is due to this point that the God almighty has put the nature love within the inside of any being, and the jurney towards perfection and more towards the holy rank, left the result to him in this world and Hereafter and the day of gaining production:

And puts each one to his own perfect action. But the clean natures and the uncleaned natures are put to the stages of Divine proximity and blessing and to the gardon as wide as the sky. But about the savage brutal natures to the ultimate stage of the hell where the poisoned scorpions and snakes are waiting for them according to their deeds. This is because to reach the desire stage and the holy stage is beyond the reach of the wicked natures.

But due to the view of Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn 'Arabī the matter of Mercifulness in the worlds is clear, through the attribute *ar-raḥīm* to the attribute justice intercedes and the punisher is under his authority.

And the Mercifulness and the Beneficence are either essence or agent. Therefore, the God Almighty possesses the rank of the essence Beneficence and mercifulness which is the manifestation of the essence for the essence and the manifestation of attributes and names and their tools, which are the constant forms, in the shape of the practical manifestation and discovering descriptive within the collective science in the stages of the unity.

Similary the God almighty possesses the agent mercifulness and Divine Beneficence which is the manifestation of the essence having found expression in the form of the action through the expansion of emanation and the perfection of emanation upon the form and expressing it objectively according

to the ultimate Divine principles. And this is one of the aspects of repeating *bismillāh* in the Qur'an. In another word this is the apparent of the inner side in different forms. Then, if *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* in *bismillāh* attributes the term *allāh*, referring to Mercifulness and Beneficence and the essence Beneficence, and that *lillāh* Refers to the agent Beneficence and mercifulness. And *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* in *al-ḥmadu lillāh* referes to the agent Lordship and *al-Ḥamd* Refers to the abstract world:

Within the sequence of being the existence of the thing which is entirely praising without any doubt is not infidelity. Except the illuminated worlds because to the learned mystic these are the mere egoism and are lack of identity of themselves. And the Worlds are the places lower than other realms. Thus, the meaning is as follows:

"In the name of God who possesses the Divine Beneficence and the essencial mercifulness. The entire worlds praising have been opened, the realm which are the limitation of the absolute divinity in the stage of the action. And the owner of the divinity stage and teachings for the other stages are the creatures having no ranks and sacred stages, like the spiritual angles and some other ones. And the owner of the merciful and beneficient divinity are the agents which is within the concept of expansion being's stage and the expansion of perfection in the stage of the vision, and also are the authority of the day on which everyone returns to them. Because their return is the same as the returning to God, since these are the manifestation of the essencial Divinity and any manifestation is nothing but itself and nothing else. And if *ar-raḥmān* is placed as an attribute of the "Name" in *bismillāh* the case will be changed and the meaning is as follows:

To the God's "Will" which this "Will" enjoys the beneficence and the agent mercifulness... and *allāh* is the essencial divinity and are His attributes. And it goes the same for *Rabb* and *Malik*.

Qayṣarī in his preface the commentary on description "*Fuṣūl*" has said: "If we consider the being merely, as whole, the articles, the stage of the name would be *ar-raḥmān*[5] Which refers to the first wisdom of *Rabb* and is being read: *lawḥ al-qaḍā wa umm al-kitāb*, Supreme Pen. And if we take it as the whole and having some constant marginal parts, which are not hidden from the whole, in this case the stage of name would be *ar-raḥīm* which is *Rabb* As a whole and the sacred table is being called and that is the "Holy Book".

The writer says: "Though this matter is correct due to one special aspect, it more suitable in the stage name *ar-raḥīm* would be put in the stage of expansion being over all the worlds marginally and mainly. And the stage of name *ar-raḥīm* would be put in the being, the expansion of perfection stage in this manner. Because the divinity of mercifulness and beneficence has taken everything within itself encompassing over the whole realms, which are the deteminated of Will and Wisdom. Then I had better say, if we take the expansion of the real being the stage of name is *ar-raḥīm* and we take the expansions of perfection the stage of name is *ar-raḥīm*.

And therefore in the praise we read "Oh God! Of you whose bounty has been spread everywhere I ask." And from the Messenger (*ṣ*) is quoted: "God possesses hundred bounties among which a single one has sent to His creatures and the people due to this one love each other and forgive each other, then He kept the rest, namely another ninety nine bounties as to bestow them to His creatures on the Resurrection Day.

One of the knowledgeable of the conduvt in his Book entitled the mystery of prayer about the commentary on verse praise after having mentioned the Tradition quoted of the Messenger (*ṣ*) says as follows:

"Naming God *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* is due to this reason that it relies on Him by essence, then His bounty has been spread

everywhere for every body, and this is because of His beneficence and all the creatures are his blessing. And His Divinity blessing is within his leading towards perfection to His pious creatures in this world and the main reward in Hereafter which covers both the virtues slaves and also the infidle ones." He goes on saying: "Whoever observes the world in this aspect that the God Almighty has created the world is the same as he observes His bounty and saw nothing but His blessing and whoever looks at the world in such aspect it is as if that he saw nothing but His mercifulness.

The writer says: "If the divine essence whatever that among the knowledgeable is being discussed namely, from the stage of divine "Will" and the absolute divinity and the stage of "*Muḥammadī*" and some other titles, according to aspects and the stages which named this stage, this stage has more relation with the stage of *raḥmāniyyah* which exist in *bismillāh*. The reason is that *ar-raḥīm*. Is by itself two adjectives which follows the name *allāh* and is of the determinations, and is in the shadow of essence *raḥmān* And not *allāh* and that reality, is the reality of human.

The *Rabb* of the perfect human; namely the collective universe, is the "Supreme Name" and is confined by *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm*. Therefore, this two have been mentioned in the Divine Book, as the subordinate ones.

But whatever he has mentioned, according to the defacing manifestation criteria, it can be apparently correct, since the beneficene stage, due to this aspect is the same as the Divine Beneficent has taught Qur'an and created the men" and Said: "Any your God is one, and there is no god but the He who is the beneficient and the merciful."

You must be aware that blessing, mercy and kindness are the manifestations of Divine Names. The Almighty bestowed these on the animals generally and on human beings especially in order to establize the races and to preserve the supreme principle

humanity. This manifestation has been inspired by the Divine bounty on which the principle of world has been relyed. And if these kinds of kindness had not been given to these creatures the sequence and the vital life of them would have expired and come to an end. But through such blessing and kindness the human and animal can survive, the same as a just king ruling his authority and looks after it. If these kindness and boundiful had not existed, no mother would have been able to stand the difficulties and pay hard severe attention to her child. This is the kind bounty that attects all hearts towards itself and naturally preserves the world. Through this blessing the Great Messengers have been sent to lead men, through this kindness the holy book has been sent. For the people's fortune all other affairs plus relation and punishment are also are included for the same purpose because anger and punishment are the manifestains of blessing.

And there is life for you in reraliation, oh men of under standing. The hell is blessing, the anger, the punishment are blessing for those who deserve gaining properity. If the purification of the hell had not existed, they would have never touched the face of properity. In short, the one whose heart is empty of the kindness to the God's creature, he must be expelled out and be throun away as not to be among the God's slave anymore.

Learned men say: These two names are of the main names as the verse says: "My Mercy embraces all things". And Says: Therefore at the beginning of the Hoily Book these two names are subordinated to the Supreme Name. And referring to that key of being, the knowledgeable have said: This name is blessing that the branch of which is kindness. It is of the name which attributes the God almight most and frequently.

In each verse of Qur'an it is repeated as to increase the lovers of God towards Him. Nothing like the expansion of

blessing can satisfy men and prevent them from disobeying. As the God almighty has introduced the Messenger (*ṣ*) and has mentioned in verse repentance, which the verse angeras follows:

There hath come onto you a messenger (one) of your selves onto whom aight that ye are overburdened is crievous, full of concern for you, for the believers, full of pity, merciful.

This clarifies the kindness manner of that great man. At the beginning of the verse "Poets" He says:

It may be that thou tormentest. Thyself (O Muḥammad) because they believe not. And at the beginning of verse cove says, yet it may be. If they believe not in this statement that thou (Muḥammad) wilt torment thy soul with grief over their foot steps.

God will protect! Being sorry about the unbelievers and being enthusiastic for their prosperity as to God pays attention and sends him message.

God's mercy is more than God's anger.

The attribute of God has begun with *raḥmān ar-raḥīm*. These names frequently have been repeated in Qur'an. God is kind to all his creatures and this case cause that the creatures were sent the great messengers to rescue them in order to be prosperous in the Worlds. He has prepared for the all the means, materially and spiritually, for being comfortable in this world and in Hereafter. The God's creatures have been come to existence through the name *raḥmān* and continue to live in this world and in Hereafter. Simultaneously as His kindness is over His anger, but if it would be necessary and the people disobey Him and cause wickedness and evil deeds the door of the mercifulness will be half-closed which follows by opening the door of anger. The creature should be worry about this case, namely when the door of anger starts to be opening and the door of kindness and blessing would be seized. The great Messenger was kind and treated his followers kindly. And through observing such a mild conduct he guided people and shared with

their problems and felt sorry for their being sad and miserable, but when he would notice that some individuals have adopet wrong ways which might harm the other people an the whole society, he would open the door of anger. The Jews of Banī Quraydah, those wrong ones who are still following the Zionist when he found out that these Zionist are harmful and cause decay and follow misdeeds, he had their heads cut, and that cancer root, uprooted. 'Alī (*'a*) despite all his mildness and kindness as far as he observed that "*Khawārij*" are plotting and cause bad deeds, he killed them all except those were able to escape.

In the time of mery, mercy, but if it is required punishment and anger.

And Noah said: my lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers in the land. If thou should leave them, they will misslead thy slaves and will beget none save lews ingraates. And the God Almighty Says: And fight them until persecution is no more... And due to this aspect all the punishment and retation through *ar-raḥmān ar-raḥīm* would be considered blessing for those wicked who are harmful for society.

My Dear Son! If you can try to be kind to all creatures especially to the human being.

As the whole creatures in this world receive the God's blessing as it has been said: No single creature possesses anything from his own. Only it is God's blessing which is world—encompassin. Whether God Who is the God of the Worlds, Whose teaching is not world—encompassing and the manifestation of blessing? Whether the teaching and the blessing can be without the world—encompassing beneficence. Therefore the one that God's favour is divided to him should not be ignored by us, and if it would be so, then it is not our fault? Is it not considered deficient and short coming?

Ṣaḥīfeh-ye Imām, vol. 16, pp. 217-218.

Interpretation

Māliki yawm ad-dīn

Going into details, it is quite explicit to the people of knowledge and men of the heart, that from the beginning of existence till the ultimate end of the system of existence that all are of the stage of beneficencent that encompassed everything and make the darkness of the world light and the silent faces of the bless receivers have been illuminated And no single spirit was able to bear the light of His glory and His high stage.

Then if the powerful stage shines through strong light all their beings will be smashed and the pillars of the sky will be shivered and the men would become unconscious.And the day when His light will appear everyone will be ruined. And that day is His absolute rulling and the returning day and He says: "Whose kingship is today?" And as there is no reply from anyone, He Himself answers: "He is the unique avenger God" And using the adjective avenger instead of merciful beneficient is because of this fact that, that day is the day of rulling these two attributes and the day of forgiveness, therefore it is expecified for the Oneness and avenger.

And at the end He called Himself the Owner and Said: "The owner of the Judegment Day". And inevitably the day when God is to manifest with glory and ownership, these two names must find their own stages. Because each name has its own stage, it should be appeared. And the stages of the names such the owner and the expert on the returning day would come to an end. And this belongs to a high stage and the holy level. After having seized all the souls, Izrā'īl's soul is seized by God finally. And God Said: "I fold the world like writer folds a pieace of paper: And Said: "Oh the calm soul return to your God happily." And Said: "As he created you, you will return?"

Sharḥ Du'ā al-Saḥar, pp. 31-32.

Interpretation

Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn

If you should not repent because you utter the following words before stating prayer:

Whether your heart attention is towards heaven and earth? Whether are you Muslim and are you away of infidelity. Whether your prayer is for God? Is not shameful that while praying you say: Whether you consider the whole praises for God, or for the creatires, or for you utter the God of the Worlds, while you see divinity in this world. Should you not repent, is not shameful. Do you worship God, stomach or genitals?

Do you want God or Ḥurī? Do you see help from God or you don't ask Him at all?

My son! Try, struggle to remember God and call nobady but Him. The pious men pray a few times daify, they repeat they appeal to anything and for achieving the satanic goals they become humble and bow. Therefore those who obey God sincerely, rely to God and no body else. God is aware of the danger of all hearts. It does not mean that you stop working and cut relation to the people and keep yourself aside from the others which is against Divine principle and the Messengers conduct.

For the God's goals all attempts should be taken into effect, not like us who are looking for some other item rather, everything should be under his will and anyhelp must be asked from Him, this is the main difference. You and I and the people like us. We are far from God's shade and His help, therefore anything would be happened should be seen from the God's blessing, even if it looks miserable to us and we don't like it.

Ṣaḥīfeh-ye Imām, vol. 18, pp. 515-518.

Interpretation

Ihdinā aṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm

The human is traveler, every traveler needs preparation. The man's preparation is his manners. The means for traveling in this dangerous dark road is the manly efforts. The needed light for this journey is the virtuous deeds. If the traveler does not pay accurate attention, he will fall into fire, the one who can not pass over this bridge; he will not be able to pass the Hereafter's Bridge.

If you chose the right path in this realm and follow the Imām 'Alī (*'a*) way, and you do not go in a wrong way you should not be afraid of anything and you can pass over the bridge. As it has been mention in traditions and in invocation of *al-Jāmi'ah* and anyone on this bridge is moving and can pass safely on the bridge he will follow suit.

The hearts which are away from the right and the reality are out of the direct nature and are involved in the wordly materials, their shadows like themselves chose the same manners and conducts. They in the Hereafter walk in a strange way, some walk up side down, some walk on their stomach, some walk on

their hands and their feel like animals, as their used to do so in this world allegorically.

Is he who goes croping on his face more rightly cuided, or who walks upright on a straight road?

It is possible that this allegorical in the allegorical world, in the reality and manifestation realm finds its own expression, in the following tradition which is quoted from the innocent Imām (*'a*) we read:

He Said: "God Almighty in the Holy Book has brought an example, and that example is about those people whe rejected Imām 'Alī's ruling they are those who will walk on their stomach and won't reach the right path. But on the contrary those who accepted his authority found the right Path and Imām 'Alī (*'a*) is the right path. In another tradition mentioned that 'Alī (*'a*) and the Imāms are the right path.

It has been quoted of Kafī who said: "With Imām Bāqir (*'a*) entered the mosque, Imām relied on me and looked at the people, we were in Bāb Banī Shabe, the he said: " Oh Fāḍil! In early time of ignorant era the people would worship the same. They were not able to recognize religion! Oh Fāḍil Behold! Look at them, then he would walk upside down in thereafter, they are the people who have been metamorphosed. Then he interpreted the verse of *man yamshī*, the right path.

This world, is the world that should be left behind, this is not a permoment place it is a temporary place. This the way that if we can go through it without falling if we can go and continue the right path, as the messenger did. If we are able to finish this way safely we will become fortunate, but if we make a mistake we will entangle with difficulties.

It has said: of *man yamshī* by the declining, Lo man is in a state of loss. The perfect human is Imām of the Time (*'a*), namely the essence of all creatures. Swear to the essence of all creatures means swear to the perfect human, the human which

has been mentioned here is the sort of man with ordinary physical shape: had face, ears, eyes, lips, mouth and so on. We are in a dilemma; one way is the right path, the human way, which is the real path amendless way beyond our imagination, and another way is the opposite way, astray. Now it is up to us, we have a choice, which we chose and follow.

God almighty in verse Praise says: Show us the straight path, the path of those whom you have favored, not the path of those who earn your anger nor of those who go astray.

There is one group who go astray the more they study the more they learn the further they go. If you study but lack of His name you are going astray, your way will be led to Hell. You either go to hell or to the right path which leads to paradise we are between these two ways, we are all upon the bridge of Hell, the nature is Hell, now we are standing upon the bridge of Hell, if we continue our way finally the Hell will be appeared and this is the wrong way. But the other way is the right path which is unbelievably narrow, dark that needs the light of guiding اِهدنا الصِّراط المُستَقيم God will lead us.

You the gentle men whose your movement is on the course of Islam, you who are wearing the religious clothes, you whose appearance are spiritual forms, should not think that reading without having God in mind, is useful for you. Sometimes science causes pride. Sometimes study makes man astray. Those who misled the others, most of whom were of the knowledgeable ones and studied a lot, but without God! The more they continued the further they went wrongly. It happens that someone seems philosopher to the people seems great theologian to the people, seem learned and knowing many things, but when he is lack of God's light, he is dark and in darkness. The knowledge without God's light is not knowledge. The one who studies in this way his intention is not God almighty, he studies for rank, he studies to gain high position he studies to become

the leader of Jamā'ah. The right path is a very narrow path, accurate path narrower and thinner than hair.

Islam cannot be perceived so easily. Islam cannot be perceived by wars. War has nothing to do with Islam. What is being said that Islam has a school, we do not know that school, and similarly we do not know human being. What we know about human is a physical shape and something long, as it is not the God's name is quite long, as it is not the God's name it is of no use, everything should be in the name of God.

We are from God we come from Him and will return to Him. We belong to God we have nothing of our own. Whatever exists is His. We return to Him. We have to see how we came from Him. In here, at God's service, we are at people's service. We struggle for God, in the right path. If we have tendencies towards either left or right we will be of those no matter to the right or to the left side we have gone the fault is the same, who we start going it should be the right path, neither Eastern nor Western, we have to follow the straight Road. It should not be left, it should not be right, it should be straight. If—God forbid—we go towards left, if we go towards right. We have gone astray and we have made a nation astray.

The straight way the right path has two points, the starting point is here and the destine point is God. The straight course prevents man from going to the left or to the right.

The straight path which you read in verse.

Is the straight path of Islam, the path of humanity the path of perfection the path to God. There are three ways: one way straight an Eastern way and a Western Way, but you must follow the straight way which leads to humanity, the just way leads finally to God. If you continue straight through, and do not go into the right or to the left, because you have hell on the left and on the right, only the straight path. Those whom God favored and bestowed them Islam as a bounty, they have the greatest

blessing, you two chose this straight path, on this way that you have come for Islam, we all, the whole nation have to look after Islam, we must struggle we must struggle for the way of God, those with whom God got angry will go to hell.

The right path leads human beings to prosperity and obliterates ambiguity and puzzlement since men are prone to choose the right path; yet, they do not know it. We pary to God to lead us onto the straight path.

All the messengers invited people to the straight path and wished to prevent them from going to the left or to the right and not to be astray. Has no other side, it is beyond the human. Whatever belongs to men is desire and whimsical desire, therefore they have been condemned. This world, this nature of light, the wordly material cause miserable and unfortunate, the messengers have been sent to make people aware of this fact and show them straight path, prevent them from going left and this tendencies which make one slave is dangerous. Islam which above all religions has appeared for the purpose of rescuing people. This colorful tempter which tempt me, lead men to calamity and catastrophe The Islamic suggest prayers and invocations through which people find a solution to show people the right and just deeds, tell them which way to chose, which way leads to God the world and another side of which again the world, then light through which the messenger have come to get us to the light side.

Allah is the protecting Guardian of those who believe He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the fire. They will abide therein.

Any motion done by man, nevertheless if is heartly an spiritual movement or any other deeds all are confined into two directions: either to God or to Satan and wrong destination. Has got two points: starting and finishing from here to God the

messenger have sent to rescue people to show them the straight path leading to God, them there are merely two ways: the way to God and the way of astray.

The messenger tries to lead the nation, people, individuals, and the society to the straight path, the way starting from here and leading up to Allah. The principle is to guide the society.

Ṣaḥīfeh-ye Imām, vol. 18, pp. 448-450.

Interpretation

Ghayr al-maghḍūbi 'alayhim wa la'ḍ-ḍāllīn

Those who see this side but fail to see the other side are dumb and intellectually deficient. In one tradition (I do not know whether it is true or not) as it has been narrated that the case of according to some interpretation is the Jewish people and The Christian (*Majma' al-Bayān*, vol 2, p. 30). It has (I do not approve it, I can not approve it) that the Prophet (ṣ) has said.

Those who wish to comment say because the Torah is focused more on the worldly affairs and political affair. The Jews are fond of the world and want to devour it and never get satisfied. They even have influence in the USA and try to devour Iran and never stop. They want to swallow everywhere and everybody. The Holy Bible says more about spiritual affairs; therefore, the attention is more on the left side (I don't know the exact phrase, may be) namely minor importance, but the spiritual affairs have been focused upon mainly, the decree that you see is the evidence for this, the decrees are most spiritual. (The Imām's speech, *Ṣaḥīfeh-ye Imām*, vol. 3, pp. 226-227).